THE Nation.

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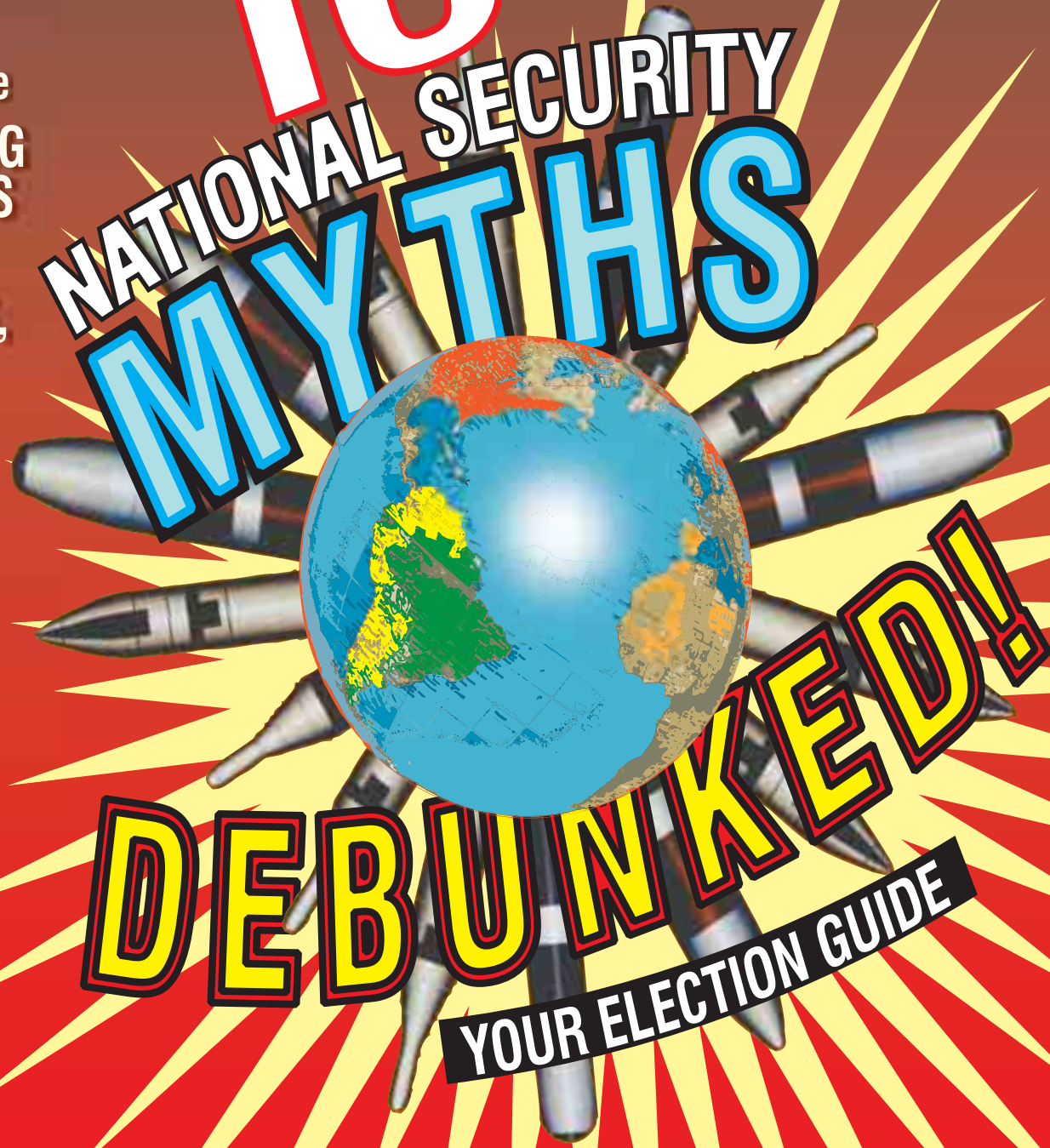

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Letters

Obama: Win First, Change Later

Oakland, Calif.
Robert L. Borosage and Katrina vanden Heuvel put the cart before the horse in "Progressives in the Obama Moment" [Sept. 1/8]. First Obama has to get elected. We must defeat John McCain and his ugly campaign. As we have seen since Richard Nixon, Republicans pursue a strategy of putting the Democrat on the defensive by manipulating fear and prejudice. I take it as a given that millions of Americans will not vote for Obama because he is black. But his biggest challenge is to put his opponent on the defensive and make a McCain presidency the voters' biggest fear. (I know the mere thought of it scares *me*.)
Robert L. Kuhn

New York, Detroit, Chicago,
Los Angeles, Washington
A spirit of change has taken root, and Obama has become its embodiment. Although *The Nation* is right to criticize Obama's campaign, more must be done to heal our democracy. We would like to introduce the Hundred Days Campaign: during the first 100 days of the next administration we will organize nationwide actions to ensure that people do not leave politics after the votes are counted and that our social priorities become the nation's priorities, in Washington and in our hometowns. Join the effort, and help cure our democracy.
Rachel Haut, Luis Brennen, Prerna Nadathur, Laurie Rojas, Jon Berger, Atlee McFellin, Dave Shukla, Tracy Sachs, Patrick St. John, Greg Gabrellas, Aric Miller
Students for a Democratic Society

There She Is, Miss America…

New York City
Thomas J. Sugrue, in his review of Rick Perlstein's *Nixonland* ["Orthogonian Visions," Sept. 1/8], commits one of the hoariest clichés in history when he speaks of "a handful of radical feminists" who monopolized media while working-class and other feminists worked in obscurity on *real* issues. Boohoo. How about changing "handful" to a spearhead that created a movement against female oppression and that thrives globally today, even in Taliban Afghanistan?

Those obscure feminists were never ignored by radical feminists. In part because of them, a historic breakthrough occurred in Atlantic City. Sugrue's remarks are a typical male leftist misogynist attempt to marginalize those "radicals" at the expense of the alleged "plodders"—to divide and thus weaken the importance of both groups.

I was at the Atlantic City demonstration in 1968. Many working-class women came to express their anger at the beauty contest. Robin Morgan, the organizer and leader of the demonstration, knew full well the power of media to place issues on the world stage. She had been a child star of a prime-time television show from age 7 to 14 (*I Remember Mama*). As a Yippie, she learned well how to use the media to bring attention to a neglected issue, the oppression of women. (She eschewed any allegiance to Jerry Rubin or Abbie Hoffman—and to me—in her famous piece "Goodbye to All That," easily available on the Internet.)

I think Morgan is a political genius, still inventing the way forward for women everywhere. But then I am prejudiced because I was her husband for twenty years and the father of our child. Being her house husband for those decades is still the most profound political commitment I ever made. I was also co-founder of the Flaming Faggots with Steven Dansky, and later with John Knoebel of The Effeminists.

It is possible to stumble over this history, as a recent *New Yorker* "Talk of the Town" item did, but life is more complicated than right or left can comprehend. Cheap male-left divisiveness only indicates how far Morgan has come. Sugrue may reflect on the past as inaccurately as he wishes. But Morgan is one aspect of the future that will grow in importance as our struggle to survive becomes increasingly, inevitably, urgently worldwide.
Kenneth Pitchford

letters@thenation.com

(continued on page 30)

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Crashing the Election

With the recent stunning collapse on Wall Street, we can now add AIG, Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch to the growing list of financial giants brought down by the burst housing bubble. They will almost certainly not be the last to fall. The rotten home loans at the center of the crisis have so metastasized throughout the worldwide financial system that no institution is likely to remain unscathed. The effects of the mortgage meltdown, however, were first felt not in the stock market but in the neighborhoods of Detroit, Las Vegas, Cleveland and everywhere else foreclosure notices popped up ahead of weeds on the front lawn. And it is there that the financial crisis—vast in scope but acutely personal in effect—has had its most wrenching impact. When rising and unstable food and gas prices are factored in, a trend driven by speculators in search of the next commodity bubble, it's clear that the very ability of many Americans to feed, warm and shelter their families is under threat. In the crucial swing state of Ohio, for example, Governor Ted Strickland has commissioned a task force to look into why a full third of Ohioans are unable to afford basic necessities.

EDITORIAL

But even as the presidential campaigns barnstorm across America, it seems from the press that they've barely set foot in *that* Ohio. For two weeks, the media reported the election as if it were *The Sarah Palin Show*, discussing at length baby bumps, Kawasaki eyeglasses and snowmobiles, oblivious of the unemployment rate's jump to a four-year high. If that grim statistic wasn't enough to concentrate their minds, perhaps the Fed's bailout, with billions of taxpayer dollars, of yet another near-death firm will do the trick. Only when the press decides to take its job—and the job of US president—seriously will this election see a debate about the crucial economic and foreign policy issues at stake (see "Ten National Security Myths Debunked" on page 13).

Only in a personality-driven, contentless climate will John McCain be able to pass off his two-faced promises of reform as a populist crusade. Railing against "multimillion-dollar payouts to CEOs," McCain now promises to bring "regulatory oversight" to Washington and "transparency and accountability to Wall Street." But his rhetoric is just lipstick on a pig. In March McCain told the *Wall Street Journal* that he is "always for less regulation," and in April—perhaps inspired by his longtime economic guru Phil Gramm, who said in July that a nation of "whiners" was in a "mental recession"—McCain described the country's economic crisis as "psychological." Now faced with a global financial crisis, McCain proposes a psychological solution—belief in his image as a maverick reformer.

Puncturing McCain's newfound Teddy Roosevelt persona will require brutal honesty from Barack Obama and his campaign. In his initial response to this latest economic breakdown, Obama called it "the most serious financial crisis since the Great Depression" but then said, "I certainly don't fault Senator McCain for these problems…I do fault the economic philosophy he subscribes to." Obama's statement was gallant but missed the mark. In fact, Senator McCain—along with every Republican and Democrat who pushed financial deregulation—*is* responsible for today's economic woes. McCain voted for the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, signed by Bill Clinton in 1999, repealing the Glass-Steagall Act, which since 1933 had kept a wall between commercial and investment banks. When that wall came tumbling down, and when the Internet bubble burst, the housing frenzy took off, as financiers sought new ways to create paper profits.

As for the press, its chance for redemp-

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NEWS & ANALYSIS

Katrina vanden Heuvel: Let's get real

William Greider: AIG bailout

Barbara Koeppel: Sarah's way—or the highway

Peter Dreier: Obama's youth revolution

NATION POLL

Reclaiming women's votes

VIDEO NATION

Naomi Klein on the economy

PROGRESSIVE CALENDAR

Post your event

tion is here, in the presidential and vice presidential debates, the first on September 26. It must put questions about the economy center stage: What has caused this crisis? Does it signal the failure of market fundamentalism, and if so, what is the alternative? What role did deregulation play in it, and what role should re-regulation play in forging a way out? Why does the government intervene when financial institutions fail but do so little to help jump-start the real economy when there is deepening economic pain for ordinary people? What do you plan to do about America's spiraling trade deficits? How will you transform the economy to ensure that all Americans enjoy the benefits of sustainable economic growth?

With only weeks left before the election, it is late to begin this conversation, but it is not too late.

Palin's Petropolitics

COMMENT

In the clinical terminology of political science, Alaska is a classic "petrostate." That is, its political system is geared toward the maximization of oil "rents"—royalties and other income derived from energy firms—to the neglect of all other economic activities. Such polities have an inherent tendency toward corruption because of the close ties that naturally develop between government officials and energy executives and because oil revenues replace taxation as a source of revenue (Alaska has no state income tax), insulating officials from the scrutiny of taxpayers. Ever since the discovery of oil in the North Slope, Alaska's GOP leadership has largely behaved in this fashion. And while Governor Sarah Palin has made some commendable efforts to dilute her party's ties to Big Oil, she is no less a practitioner of petrostate politics than her predecessors.

To put things in perspective: in 2007 Alaska produced approximately 719,000 barrels of oil per day. That puts it in the same ballpark as Egypt (710,000), Oman (718,000) and Malaysia (755,000). Of these, Oman is particularly interesting as a parallel. According to the Energy Department, "Oman's economy is heavily reliant on oil revenues, which account for about 75 percent of the country's export earnings"—an assessment that would describe Alaska nicely if it were an independent nation. Equally revealing, oil rents provide 42 percent of Alaska's annual revenue, more than any other source. If lavish federal contributions were discounted (Alaska has one of the nation's highest per capita rates of federal subsidies), oil's share of state revenue would jump to 53 percent—about the same as in Venezuela.

Since taking office as governor in 2006, Palin has devoted herself to a single overarching objective: increasing Alaska's income from oil and gas. To this end, she has pushed through two signal pieces of legislation: the creation of Alaska's Clear and Equitable Share (ACES) tax on oil and natural gas production, and the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act (AGIA). The ACES tax replaced the Petroleum Profits Tax, which had been instituted by her now-disgraced Republican predecessor, Frank Murkowski, and was widely viewed as being excessively favorable to the oil companies. Under ACES the companies are taxed at a higher rate, and a progressive surcharge of 0.4 percent is added for every dollar the net profit per barrel exceeds $30. But—and this is a big

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Noted.

PRIVATE DICK: On January 20 tricky Dick Cheney will execute his plan to escape Washington with records created during his tenure as vice president—unless he's stymied by a court order. Cheney has long insisted that as president of the Senate he is not part of the executive branch. And the Bush administration has amended the Presidential Records Act (PRA)—a law passed by Congress in 1978 requiring the president and vice president to preserve and deposit their papers with the **National Archives and Records Administration** (NARA)—in a manner that may exempt Cheney from compliance.

To prevent this history heist, the **Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington** (CREW) filed a federal lawsuit September 8 seeking an injunction against Cheney's intention to sequester eight years of government documents. I am one of seven plaintiffs, along with historian **Stanley Kutler**, the **Organization of American Historians,** the **Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations** and others; **Anne Weismann**, chief counsel of CREW, is our lawyer.

In addition to seeking a judgment against Cheney's interpretation of the PRA, the lawsuit seeks a preliminary injunction requiring preservation of all documents pending resolution of the suit. Such a court order is needed in light of Cheney's clear pattern of secrecy and obfuscation. In addition to being associated with the disappearance of e-mails related to the origins of the Iraq War, he has consistently refused to allow the NARA to inspect his office for compliance with classification requirements. He has also refused to provide information, as government ethics law requires, about travel funded by outside sources. He has even refused to provide Congress with a staff directory.

What is at stake is nothing less than the vitality of our democracy. After Bush and Cheney's tenure has expired, it is the public's right to know in a timely manner how they fulfilled their responsibilities. Their actions are not a privileged secret that they have the right to control. That is how dictatorships operate. It appears that the vice president, who purports to be the great champion of democracy abroad, cares little about sustaining at home the openness that the democratic process requires. MARTIN SHERWIN

ROSENBERGS, REVISITED: So 91-year-old **Morton Sobell** has confirmed to the *New York Times* what **Abe Osheroff** revealed four years ago in **Ivy Meeropol**'s HBO documentary: that **Julius Rosenberg** was at least peripherally involved in a secret effort to aid the Soviet Union when it was engaged in a death match with Nazi Germany. The Russians were then our allies and the Germans were our enemies. A few years later, that was no longer the case.

The sad thing is not what Sobell revealed but that he waited so long to say it. A lot of well-meaning people trusted his protestations of innocence and defended him. Imagine if he had said fifty years ago, "We came of age in the 1930s, when as Americans we suffered under the bankruptcy of capitalism and as Jews we experienced the evils of anti-Semitism. While GM was making engines for the Nazis, you bet we aided the Russians. Someone had to." Maybe a few million GIs with vivid memories of places like the Ardennes and Arnhem wouldn't have disagreed. Actually, the big news in the Rosenberg case was the release on September 11 of most of the grand jury minutes. They confirm that **Ruth Greenglass**, **Ethel Rosenberg**'s sister-in-law, lied about Ethel's involvement. But the real story is that the prosecution knew it. If Sobell is right, the prosecution and **Judge Irving Kaufman** have blood on their hands. It was a legal lynching. Nothing more, nothing less. JEFF KISSELOFF

TRAGEDY, FARCE: "The fundamentals of our economy are strong."

—**John McCain**, September 15

"The American people can remain confident in the soundness and the resilience of our financial system."

—**Henry Paulson**, September 15

"Our economy is structurally sound for the long term."

—**George W. Bush**, February 11

"The economy is fundamentally sound."

—**Herbert Hoover**, October 1931

O CANADA! Something remarkable happened in Canada on September 10, and it offers an example of what ought to be possible in the United States. Canada's television networks decided to exclude the leader of the country's Green Party from nationally televised debates between the major party candidates competing in the country's October 14 election. Though the Greens hold only one seat in Parliament, the party—like its US equivalent—is highly organized, has won many local offices and is competing in a sufficient number of constituencies to form a government. Green leader **Elizabeth May** launched a national campaign urging Canadians to "reclaim democracy" by demanding a place in the debates. Canadians responded, dispatching e-mails, letters and phone calls to the networks and the major-party leaders. Former Canadian Prime Minister **Joe Clark**, who governed as a Progressive Conservative, joined the crusade, declaring, "The immediate question about Canada's election is not who will win but how open and inclusive the campaign will be. Elections can confirm bad practices or change them. Ours need changing." The day Clark spoke up, the networks and the major parties backed down, allowing May in.

We need a similar outcry in the United States. Excluding Green nominee **Cynthia McKinney**, Libertarian **Bob Barr**, independent **Ralph Nader** and their running mates—all of whom will be on enough ballots to conceivably, if not realistically, win the presidency—is not just undemocratic; it will narrow the quality of the discourse in the upcoming presidential and vice presidential debates. Canada will have multiparty debates this fall. The United States should as well. JOHN NICHOLS

DOORS FOR PEACE: On September 20 a very different kind of peace march will take place. Spearheaded by **USAction** and **TrueMajority**, the **Million Doors for Peace** campaign has enlisted 25,000 volunteers to knock on their neighbors' doors—yup, a million of them—and ask people to sign a petition (milliondoorsforpeace.org/petition.php) urging the next Congress to bring US troops home from Iraq within one year.

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but—the companies receive an increased tax credit for some new investments in exploration and infrastructure improvements.

The AGIA proposal, which has received more national attention, is intended to facilitate construction of a natural gas pipeline from Alaska's North Slope to Canada and eventually the Lower 48. Under the bill, Alaska will provide incentives, including a $500 million handout, to any company willing to build the $40 billion–plus conduit. (The $500 million will be used to help defray the costs of gaining regulatory approval, clearing environmental hurdles and so forth.) In August the Alaska Senate approved a state license for TransCanada Corporation of Calgary to pursue federal certification for construction of a 1,715-mile pipeline from the North Slope to Canada's Alberta Gas Hub. Palin said at the GOP convention that the pipeline will "help lead America to energy independence," but it's clear from her advocacy of the AGIA and TransCanada's application that her principal goal was to increase Alaska's income from gas production. (The fact that the proposed pipeline will end in Canada, not the United States, does not seem to have attracted any notice.)

The question thus arises: how does Palin's experience as a maestro of petropolitics bear on her candidacy for vice president? To begin with, it should be clear that she has nothing in common with the leaders of any other state. Although it is true that Texas produces more oil per day than Alaska, Texas is no longer a petrostate, since its economy has become so much more diversified. Alaska is virtually alone in possessing a large (oil-supplied) state budget surplus—now about $5 billion—at a time when most states and the federal government are facing massive deficits and citizen groups are rising up in fury at the prospect of budget cuts. Palin is simply unqualified to deal with the demanding economic realities of any nation that is not a petrostate.

Second, Palin's only real nitty-gritty legislative experience is in measures aimed at expanding oil and gas production, to the virtual exclusion of other factors, including the environment. Although critical of the cozy ties between her GOP predecessors and Big Oil, Palin, like them, views Alaska as an unlimited source of raw materials to be exploited for maximum economic benefit, much like the leaders of comparable petrostates (Kuwait, Nigeria and Venezuela). She says she cares about the environment, but her support for drilling in ANWR and her eagerness to push the AGIA pipeline through forests in Alaska and the Yukon suggest otherwise. We can only assume that, as veep, she would favor similar policies in the Lower 48, entailing more drilling, digging and pipe-laying in environmentally sensitive areas.

Finally, much like the leaders of other petrostates that depend on oil sales to fill government coffers, Palin is leery of efforts to promote renewable sources of energy and other petroleum alternatives—the exact opposite of running mate John McCain's proclaimed objective and that of most members of Congress. At a meeting of the National Governors Association in February, Palin argued against providing subsidies for alternative energy sources, claiming that domestic sources of oil and gas—many located in Alaska—can satisfy the nation's needs for a long time to come. "The conventional resources we have can fill the gap between now and when new technologies become economically competitive and don't require subsidies," she asserted. When pressed by a reporter for *Oil & Gas Journal* she went further, denouncing government support for renewable energy. "I just don't want things to get out of hand with incentives for renewables, particularly since they imply subsidies, while ignoring fuels we already have on hand." Surely, at this moment in history—with global oil output facing imminent decline and global warming an inescapable reality—anyone opposed to government support of renewable energy should be considered stupendously ill equipped for national office.

MICHAEL T. KLARE

Michael T. Klare's latest book is Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy.

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

Truth by Repetition

(Sarah Palin, via speeches, and the press, via news accounts, discuss her position on the "bridge to nowhere.")

I told them thanks, but no thanks, Palin said.
We'd rather pay for it ourselves instead.

But here's a tape on which you clearly say
You're for the bridge. The federals should pay.

I told them thanks, but no thanks, Palin said.
We'd rather pay for it ourselves instead.

You weren't opposed at all until the day
That Congress made that project DOA.

I told them thanks, but no thanks, Palin said.
We'd rather pay for it ourselves instead.

And then you thought it perfectly OK
For you to take the money anyway.

I told them thanks, but no thanks, Palin said.
We'd rather pay for it ourselves instead.

But… oh, skip it.

Haiti's Unnatural Disaster

Haiti has been lashed by four devastating storms in thirty days. Cellphones are dead in much of the country, and reports are coming in only slowly, but sober estimates suggest that more than a thousand have died—so far—and up to a million have been left homeless. Although Hurricane Ike's full fury was unleashed on Cuba, the death toll in Haiti was more than ten times that of all of the neighboring islands combined.

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COMMENT

Why is Haiti so vulnerable to such storms? Coastal cities like Gonaïves—where in 2004 Tropical Storm Jeanne killed twice as many as Hurricane Katrina did in New Orleans—are situated on a flood plain, making them vulnerable to flash floods and mudslides triggered by heavy rains in the deforested mountains. Haiti is almost completely deforested, and still its poor majority fell trees for fuel to cook whatever meager rations are on hand. Forest cover, already sparse, has been reduced by half in the past twenty years. In more than twenty-five years here, I've never seen significant flooding in the central highlands, but recently our co-workers in Hinche, the district capital of the Central Department, were wading through chest-deep water to rescue families whose frail homes were under water or swept away. Deforestation is to blame.

What can be done to lessen the impact of severe weather in Haiti? Several steps must be taken immediately to assuage the massive suffering. The first is direct relief: Hanna hit Gonaïves September 2. A full week later, after the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* had measured the tragedy, portions of the city remained under several feet of filthy water and tens of thousands were still stranded on rooftops, hungry, thirsty and increasingly angry. Who can blame them? Much talk yields little action, and that action is poorly coordinated, tentative and underfunded.

Barely more than a week on the job, Prime Minister Michèle Pierre-Louis came to central Haiti to inspect damage and discuss relief operations. Hers is surely the toughest job in the hemisphere. People here note that she's "starting the job with two disasters: hurricanes and back-to-school." Of millions of children scheduled to begin classes, few have shown up. Meetings ostensibly about disaster relief put the new prime minister before a litany of complaints about crops destroyed, livestock lost, food and water shortages, and the perennial question of every Haitian parent: how will we send our children to school? Across the country, parents (many homeless) fretted about how to pay school fees (or prove that they had). Hours after Pierre-Louis visited a shabby hospital in central Haiti and met with local officials about the flood of refugees expected from the coast, the bridge she had crossed was swept away in another Ike-induced flash flood. It was the sixth major bridge to fall—the last one connecting us to the coast. For days, flooded regions north and west of the capital were cut off from the rest of the country.

Pierre-Louis, an economist new to politics, knows that these disasters are not purely "natural." She also knows that the rural poor cut down trees to make charcoal because they have no choice. Only alternative fuels and reforestation, linked with other public works, and thus jobs, can reverse Haiti's deforestation. Jobs outside the agricultural sector are urgently needed if reforestation is to happen. This should make progressives slow to disparage new jobs in the tourist and apparel industries, dealt severe blows by the political unrest of the recent past.

That Haiti is a veritable graveyard of development projects has less to do with Haitian culture and more to do with the nation's place in the world. The history that turned the world's wealthiest slave colony into the hemisphere's poorest country has been tough, in part because of a lack of respect for democracy both among Haiti's small elite and in successive French and US governments. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the US simply refused to acknowledge Haiti's existence. In the latter half, gunboats pre-empted diplomacy. And in 1915 US Marines began a twenty-year military occupation and formed the modern Haitian army (whose only target has been the Haitian people). After the fall of Duvalier in 1986, Washington continued to support unelected, mainly military, governments. Indeed, it was not until after 1990, when Haiti had its first democratic elections, that assistance to the government was cut back and finally cut off. The decay of the public sector—through aid cutoffs and neoliberal policies—is one of the chief reasons Haiti, unlike neighboring Cuba, is unable to respond to hurricanes with effective relief.

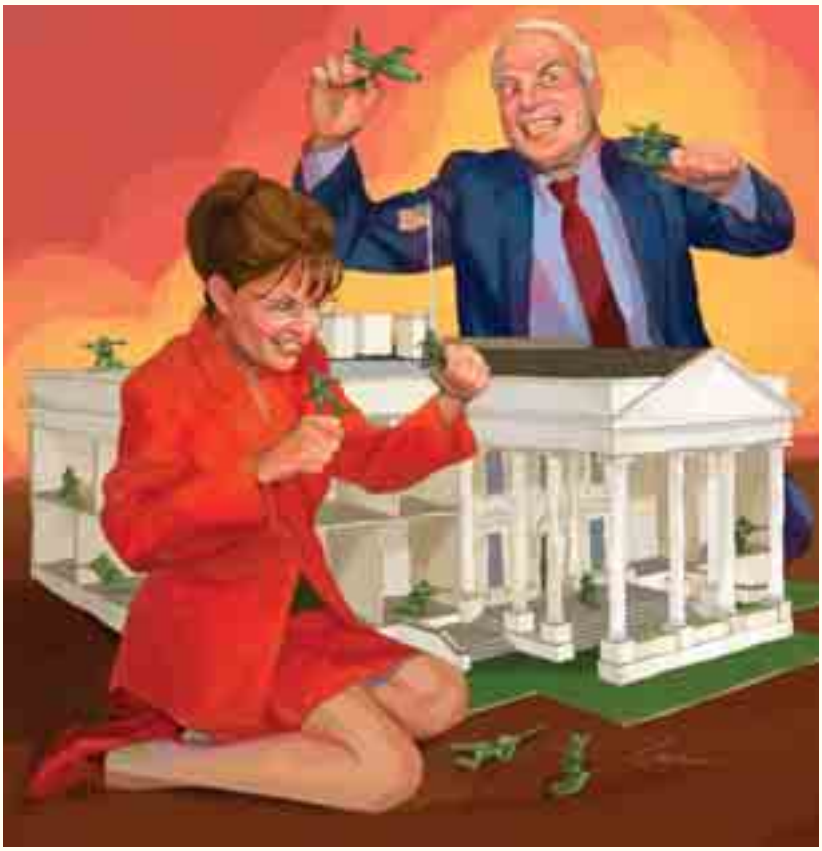
Haiti needs and deserves a modern Marshall Plan that rebuilds public institutions and creates jobs outside of the worn-down agricultural sector. Without one, it will have a hard time surviving the hurricane season. And next year will be worse.

PAUL FARMER

Paul Farmer, a professor at Harvard medical school, was the founding director of Partners in Health. He has worked in Haiti for twenty-five years.

Comix Nation

by ZINA SAUNDERS



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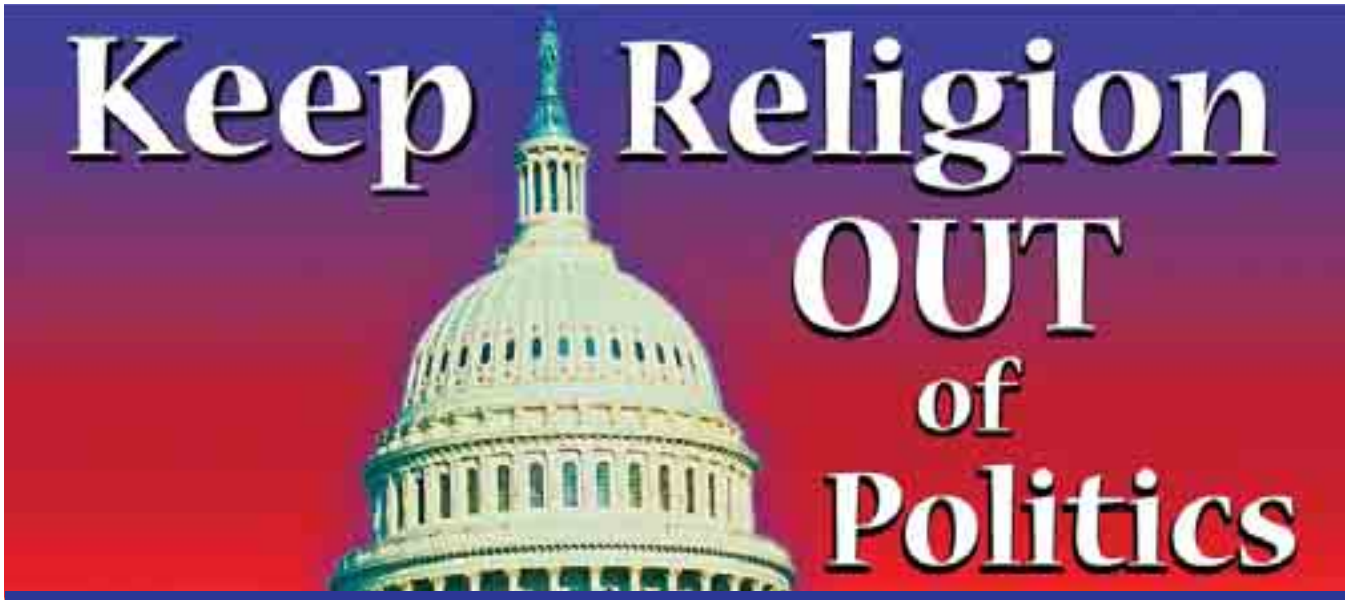

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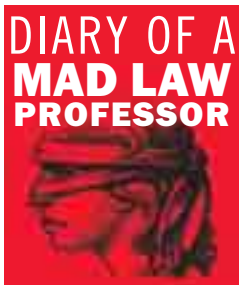
Patricia J. Williams

Lipstick Jungle

Andy Warhol would have loved Sarah Palin. She really is the ultimate soup can. For anyone who never quite understood the point of an art form in which the iconicity of a mass-produced object becomes an end above and beyond its contents—well, welcome to the fame factory.

Warhol is known for having minimized or even disguised his expressive role in the works he produced; yet he re-presented banal commercial images in ways that were playful and captivating despite their erstwhile familiarity. His explorations with the "kitschy," the "cheap" and the "ordinary" involved small cognitive surprises that were at once obvious and subtle: he'd disclose a pattern of layered color or he'd shift scale in a way that upended conventional meaning or he'd reiterate an image so emphatically that "mass" production was revealed as obsessive. What Warhol did with Mao Zedong and Marilyn Monroe is precisely what the Republican Party has done with Sarah Palin.



The morning after Barack Obama's speech at Invesco Field, I was giddily high on happiness hormones. "Beat that, ridiculously unpopular Bushites," I thought. "Kumbaya, my Lord," I sang, as I checked out of my hotel and hailed a cab to Denver airport.

The first sign that I had entered hell's handbasket was the grim little smile on the taxi driver's face. The second thing that hit me was the sound of his radio, which was very, very loud. It was tuned to Rush Limbaugh. Palin had just been presented in a press conference as McCain's running mate. She was reciting what would soon become a familiar litany: I am your average hockey mom. I worked my way up through the PTA. Here are my children—Trigger, Trapper, Plucky, Pillow and Plum (or that's how I heard that rat-a-tat blizzard of names the first time around). Most remarkable was the vampiric over-voice of Mr. Dittohead himself: Limbaugh was interjecting wickedly throughout Palin's speech, delivering the talking points that would become well-burnished clichés by the end of the week. "I want to see Sarah Palin age in office," he said, with a leer in his voice. "Imagine Hillary watching this," he said with naked longing. "Imagine if Hillary had won the nomination. She'd lose against this woman." Limbaugh was having quite a cackle: "I'd love to see Hillary right now…" he said over and over again.

Five days later, Sarah Palin formally accepted the Republican Party's nomination for vice president of the United States of America. She did so in a speech that echoed, sometimes word for word, Limbaugh's earlier over-voice. She did so in a speech that, according to *Time*, had been written by Republican Party planners well before Sarah Palin was even identified as the nominee.

As someone who was trained in advertising, Warhol had mastered many of the tools of expert propagandists. One such device is *prosopopeia*, a rather literary term for what happens when the Pillsbury Doughboy persuades you to buy a bread product by giggling so charmingly after that poke to his puffy little tummy. *Prosopopeia* is the personification of an abstraction. As theorist Barbara Johnson says in her book *Persons and Things*, "A speaking thing can sell itself; if the purchaser responds to the speech of the object, he or she feels uninfluenced by human manipulation and therefore somehow not duped. We are supposed not to notice how absurd it is to be addressed by the Maalox Max bottle, or Mr. Clean, or Mrs. Butterworth."

It is in precisely this sense that Warhol's portraits are calculated disguises, masks that artfully undermine the specificity of his subjects and render them theatrically populist images. There is, for example, a wonderful Warhol self-portrait, now on exhibit at Ohio State's Wexner Center for the Arts, in which he wears white face makeup, a woman's wig, eyeliner and bright red lipstick. He is to Kabuki femininity what Sarah Palin is to Kabuki Republican masculinity: iconic, self-proclaiming, yet concealed. That this is literally the case is underscored by the invisible and advance authorship of "her" acceptance speech. Imagine that speech as it lay waiting for just the right someone to deliver it. Imagine the accents and intonations of the tryouts they must have had: what gun-toting, warmongering, polar-bear extinguishing, creationist, antiabortionist man could have gotten away with it?

How do you sell a box of poison?, they must have wondered. Dress it up in drag, they obviously concluded.

In the few weeks since Sarah Palin has become a household name, she's often been glibly compared to a Barbie doll—and certainly her lack of knowledge of the Bush doctrine, or her comments about not knowing what the vice president does, make me wish she'd been recalled as fast as that talking Barbie who complained that "Math class is tough." But I think the analogy is more apt when thinking about how Palin has been mass-marketed. As Barbara Johnson says, "The packaging is part of what the consumer buys: not only can Barbie not stand without the box, but in it she is positioned for maximum effect. Some dolls come in boxes that almost function like mirrors: the commodity is surrounded by a gleaming aura that adds glamour to its appeal."

This is the secret, too, of purportedly unscripted reality shows like *American Idol* and *America's Next Top Model*. None of those shows are about enduring talent or fame that lasts more than fifteen minutes. Week after week they crank out the "winners," the "survivors," the soup cans. The consuming public seems oblivious of the degree to which its "idols" are not even uniquely American but manufactured by global franchises with local versions sold in countries all over the world. That kind of commercial manipulation, it seems to me, is exactly the template for Sarah Palin's pull in this election. That so much of the public is willing to buy it is something I find much more disconcerting than lipstick on a pit bull; to me, it looks frighteningly like Karl Rove in designer glasses and a skirt. ■

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Eric Alterman

Something Stupid

New York Times pundit Thomas Friedman complains that the McCain campaign is "making America stupid." This from a leading voice in the media who once explained to Charlie Rose that America must invade Iraq in order to tell Arabs to "suck on this."

Years of ideological cheerleading and stenographic coverage of the Bush administration by the MSM have empowered the McCain campaign to believe it can get away with linguistic murder. It sees an opportunity to exploit the elite media's infuriating combination of arrogance, ignorance and smug self-importance to lie its way into the White House. And given how unpopular the media have made themselves, it just might work.

Take Sarah Palin's interview with Charles Gibson. Much of the debate has focused on Palin's lack of familiarity with the words "Bush doctrine." But what of Gibson's ignorance? His question demonstrated no comprehension of the ambiguity and amorphousness the alleged doctrine has acquired in the wake of its failed application in Iraq. I hate to say this, but Charles Krauthammer is actually correct when he argues, "And at least she didn't pretend to know—while he looked down his nose and over his glasses with weary disdain, sighing and 'sounding like an impatient teacher,' as the *Times* noted. In doing so, he captured perfectly the establishment snobbery and intellectual condescension that has characterized the chattering classes."

True, Krauthammer is deliberately clouding the issue. It's one thing not to know that Paul played drums on "The Ballad of John and Yoko" because Ringo was out of town. It's quite another not to know the name of the Beatles' drummer. But Gibson's condescending pomposity allows McCain/Palin apologists to muddy the issue of her ignorance by pointing to Gibson's own. Again, Gibson may or may not be stupid. His questioning of the Democratic candidates during two debates was filled with misstatements and a laserlike focus on issues of nonexistent significance. But as with so many members of the punditocracy, his apparent stupidity is adulterated with so much arrogance that sympathy with his putative targets becomes all but axiomatic.

Another example, about which I've seen little or no discussion: Gibson asked Palin, "What if Israel decided it felt threatened and needed to take out the Iranian nuclear facilities?" Palin responded, "Well, first, we are friends with Israel, and I don't think that we should second-guess the measures that Israel has to take to defend themselves and for their security."

Where to begin? Well, yes, Palin's answer may fly in a nation where it can be politically suicidal to question anything about Israel. But it's idiotic when it comes to "real life." Seriously, you're not allowed to second-guess any action your friends think they need to take to defend themselves? What if you think they're wrong? What if you have better information? What if you think your friend is going to get a whole bunch of people, including your friend and yourself, killed? What, after all, are friends for?

And sorry, Charlie, but Israel already "feels threatened" by Iran and has been considering its minimal military options quite publicly. The ABC anchor poses the question of Israel deciding to "take out the Iranian nuclear facilities" as if it were a stroll through Central Park on an autumn afternoon. But anyone who knows anything about these facilities and Israel's capabilities knows that Israel has no conventional option to "take out" Iran's nuclear program. Israel's only option to "take out" the program—rather than perhaps delay it slightly—would be to launch a pre-emptive nuclear attack on Iran. So Mr. Smartypants was in reality asking Palin if she supports the mass murder of millions of Iranians, along with the likely counterattacks against Israel and the United States all over the world because of something we can all agree Israelis already feel. And Palin said yes. Twice. And Gibson, failing to understand his own question, let that go. (God forbid anyone in Iran or anywhere else takes this nutty conversation seriously…)

Recently the media have begun to pick up on the McCain campaign's strategy of brazenly lying to the public whenever convenient. Even the ladies on *The View* got angry and called the campaign's statements "lies" to McCain's face. Among the most egregious were the allegation that Barack Obama had called Palin a pig and the accusation that he favors sex education for children too young to read. And yet many in the media cling to the belief that it is the calling of a reporter to report a politician's lies without apparent prejudice. In the *Washington Post*, not only did Jonathan Weisman and Peter Slevin take no position on the truth or falsehood of McCain's dishonest allegations; they waited a full eleven paragraphs before noting that the Obama campaign believed "all of the accusations against him are a reach, if not fabrications."

I called the deputy editor of the paper's national section, Bill Hamilton, and left him a lengthy but polite voicemail message inquiring as to his paper's policy regarding passing on untruths to its readers. (Remember, this same newspaper ran an article, earlier in the campaign, on the question of whether Obama was a Muslim without bothering to inform its readers that the charge was false.) I received no response.

Kudos, therefore, to the news pages of the *New York Times* for demonstrating the courage and self-confidence so conspicuously lacking at the *Post*. Not only did the paper's coverage explicitly demonstrate the falsehood of the accusations; a front-page story examined the phenomenon of McCain trying to lie himself into the White House.

Post readers had to go to its op-ed pages to find the truth. There, among many former forsaken McCainiac pundits expressing similar views, Ruth Marcus explained that "John McCain's campaign has been more dishonest, more unfair, more…dishonorable than Barack Obama's."

Too bad for the country that the paper's news pages—like so much of the MSM—can't handle this simple truth. ■

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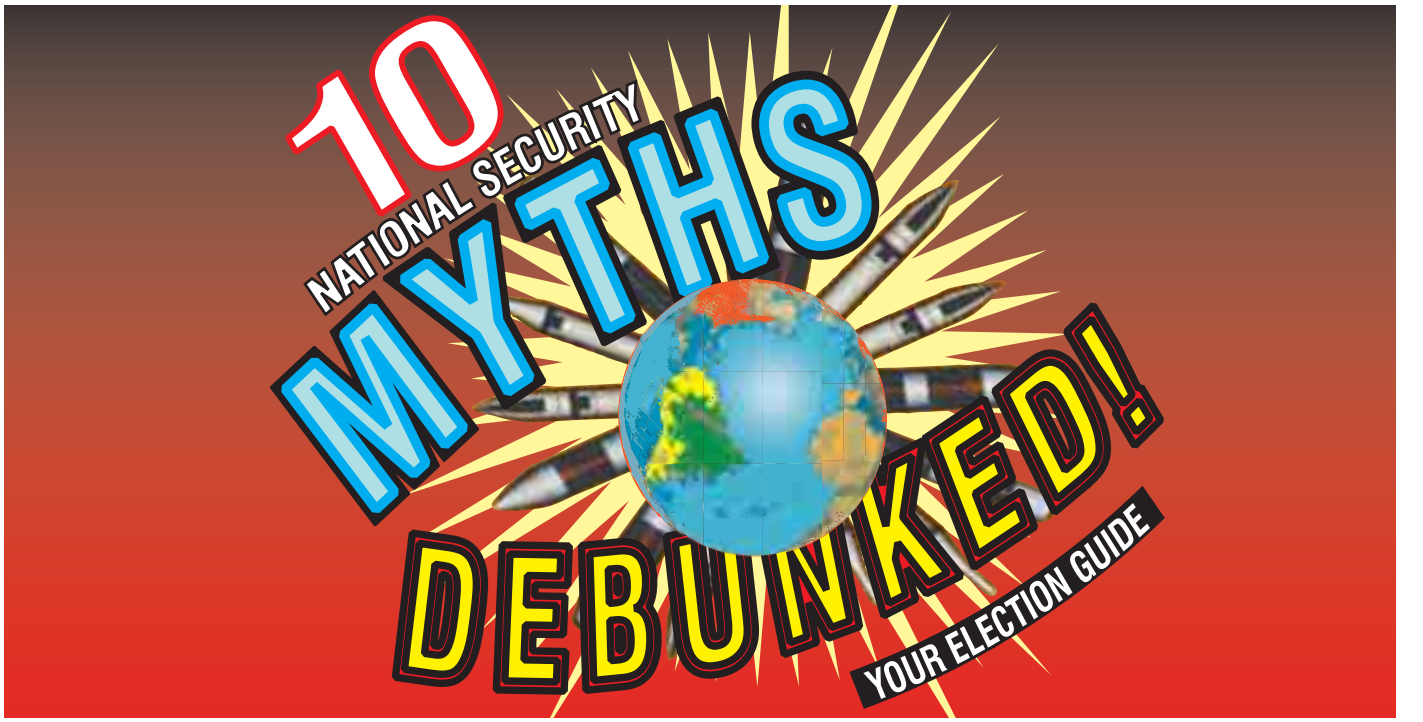

Here's what is really at stake for the United States and the world.

The Iraq War is a testament to the great damage a foreign policy based on myths, lies and distortions can do to our nation's security and well-being. As the election draws near, a new set of myths and fallacies as misleading as those that led the Senate to support George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq have become embedded in our foreign policy discourse. Many of them are being perpetuated by the very same political forces that peddled the myth of mushroom clouds coming from Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Others are the product of muddled thinking on the part of both Republicans and Democrats. If left unchallenged, these myths and fallacies could influence the outcome of the election and shape policy in the next administration. In this special feature, put together by *Nation* editors with Sherle Schwenninger, a frequent *Nation* contributor and director of the Global Economic Policy Program at the New America Foundation, we dissect ten of them and offer what we believe is a more accurate depiction of what is at stake for the United States and the world.

Myth 1. It's a dangerous world. We face an array of serious national security threats that require an experienced Commander in Chief.

John McCain's supporters have repeated this refrain over and over, replete with 3 AM imagery, to call attention to his presumed national security credentials and to cast doubt on Barack Obama's readiness to be Commander in Chief. Obama has on occasion challenged the politics of fear, but many of his supporters have too readily conceded that it is a dangerous world.

The world is more dangerous than it would have been had the Bush administration not invaded Iraq, spurned Iran's diplomatic overtures in 2003 and unnecessarily antagonized Russia by expanding NATO and withdrawing from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. But the world is far less dangerous than it has been in previous election years—certainly less dangerous than in 1960, when John F. Kennedy was elected, or in 1980, when Ronald Reagan was voted into office. Seven years after the 9/11 attacks, it is evident that Al Qaeda lacks the capacity to pose a systemic threat to America. Since 9/11 there have been no major terrorist attacks against US targets outside the war zones of Iraq and Afghanistan.

As for "great power" conflict, China, India, Brazil and Russia are all stakeholders in the current international system and would prefer to work with the United States rather than challenge it militarily. Iran is too weak economically and militarily to pose a threat to the United States or to US allies in the Middle East and is years away from obtaining nuclear weapons. The stability of nuclear Pakistan and oil-rich Saudi Arabia remains a concern, but both countries have proved to be more resilient—and, in the case of Saudi Arabia, more capable of reform—than their critics have allowed.

This is not to say that the United States does not face major international challenges. These challenges relate to the economic rise of China and India, the transfer of huge amounts of our wealth to petrodollar states, the vulnerabilities that come with the complex interdependence of industrial production and financial systems created by globalization, and the incipient struggle over resources, particularly oil and water. But the skills and resources needed to meet these challenges are not the warrior instincts highlighted in McCain's Commander in Chief ads. When the phone rings at 3 AM, it will more likely be a call warning that an international deal to rescue an American bank that is "too big to fail" has collapsed, and that the Treasury and Fed will have to step in, than a call about a terrorist attack on American soil or missiles being fired on an American ship. The nerves and judgment of a good crisis-management team may indeed be in high demand in the next

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administration, but not those that the catchphrase "It's a dangerous world" brings to mind.

Myth 2. The surge has worked. To withdraw from Iraq now would snatch defeat from the jaws of victory and embolden Islamic extremists.

This is McCain's main talking point on Iraq, and his supporters have used the "success" of the surge to cast doubt on Obama's judgment. Civilian and military casualties in Iraq have indeed declined since the deployment of additional US forces. But to say the surge worked is misleading in three ways. First, it confuses the temporary surge of US forces in 2007–08 with a number of other factors that reduced violence. As US officials in Iraq have admitted, the decision by Sunni groups to rein in Al Qaeda–oriented extremists, along with the US military's decision to pay former Sunni insurgents who joined the Awakening Councils—both of which began well before the surge—deserves much of the credit for the decline in violence. So does the decision by Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr to order his militia to stand down during this period.

We are losing in Afghanistan not because we have too few troops there but because our military has turned the population against us.

Second, the surge has had an ugly flip side. To reduce the violence, the US military built concrete walls to separate Sunnis and Shiites, which facilitated ethnic cleansing by both sides but especially by Shiite militias against Sunni residents of Baghdad. The drop-off in violence reflects the fact that ethnic cleansing led to the internal partition of Iraqi cities and regions, reducing the opportunity for sectarian killing.

Third, the surge has not created the conditions for political reconciliation or a stable Iraq, which, after all, was its main purpose. The "success" of the surge was based on Sunni repression of jihadi extremists, ethnic cleansing and separation walls, not compromise. The Shiite-led government seems no more willing to compromise on key issues than it was before the surge. Indeed, the Maliki administration is now targeting Sunni leaders of the Awakening movement, threatening to undo the fragile progress that has been made. Thus the surge has emboldened the government to consolidate its sectarian gains and buck the wishes of its American supporters, even to the point of demanding a timetable for the end of the occupation.

Myth 3. We cannot allow Afghanistan to become a safe haven for terrorists. We therefore must redouble our military efforts there or face another terrorist attack.

Since Barack Obama and John McCain both support sending more troops to Afghanistan, the election may create a bipartisan consensus for increasing the US military commitment to "winning" the "right" war. But such a consensus would be based on several mistaken notions.

First, the United States and its NATO allies are losing the war in Afghanistan not because we have had too few military forces but because our military presence, along with the corruption of the Hamid Karzai government, has gradually turned the Afghan population against us, swelling the ranks of Taliban recruits. American airstrikes have repeatedly killed innocent civilians. Sending thousands of additional troops will not secure a democratic and stable Afghanistan, because the country is not only deeply divided but also fiercely resistant to outside forces. Indeed, more troops may only engender more anti-American resistance and cause groups in neighboring Pakistan to step up their support for the Taliban in order to stop what they see as a US effort to advance US and Indian interests in the region. As the British and the Soviets discovered before us, Afghanistan can easily become a trap for any great power seeking to establish control of the country.

Second, securing Afghanistan is not necessary to US security and may actually undermine our goal of defeating Al Qaeda. It makes no sense to commit more troops and money to a war in Afghanistan that cannot be won when Al Qaeda can operate relatively freely in parts of Pakistan. The key to the defeat of Al Qaeda and its protectors lies with the Pakistani government and its ability to establish control over its remote territory. Major groups within Pakistan's military and intelligence services are reluctant to take action against the extremists for fear it would help the United States and India consolidate control over Afghanistan. Expanding the war in Afghanistan may only further destabilize Pakistan by deepening divisions within that country, especially if Washington persists with its new policy of extending American military operations into Pakistan. The best way to get Pakistan to take action against Al Qaeda is for the United States to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan, encourage the Karzai government to negotiate with the Taliban to end the civil war and redirect US military efforts toward economic assistance, which would strengthen the popular appeal of the Pakistani and Afghan governments.

Third, even if remnants of Al Qaeda's leadership are still there, the value of Afghanistan and Pakistan as an Al Qaeda safe haven is greatly exaggerated. Pakistan's tribal areas are of limited use in training extremists to blend into US society or learn how to fly airplanes or make explosives (most of the planning for the 9/11 attacks took place in Hamburg and Florida, not Afghanistan). Nor is this remote and isolated area the best location from which to direct an effective terror campaign or recruit new members. That is why Al Qaeda is a decentralized network whose leaders in Pakistan can offer at most moral support and encouragement. American safety thus depends not on eliminating faraway safe havens for Al Qaeda but on common-sense counterterrorist and national security measures—extensive intelligence cooperation, expert police work, effective border control and the occasional surgical use of special forces.

Myth 4. Iran is responsible for much of the violence against US forces in Iraq; by using its proxies in Lebanon and Gaza, it threatens to dominate the Middle East.

Iran has been able to increase its influence in the region not because of its strengths but because of Washington's blunders, most notably its illegal invasion of Iraq, which brought to

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power a pro-Iranian Shiite government, and its policy of isolating Hezbollah and Hamas, which has opened the door for Tehran to forge a closer alliance with both groups. Although strong enough to make any military action against its territory costly, Iran has a very modest ability to project military power and therefore poses little threat to its neighbors. Its economy is overly dependent on high oil prices and is so badly managed that it depends on imported gas and other distillates. And its Islamic system of government has very limited ideological appeal in the predominantly Sunni Middle East, as evidenced by the failure of its earlier effort to export revolution. In recent years it has made progress in its uranium-enrichment program, but experts agree that it is years away from being able to produce a nuclear weapon.

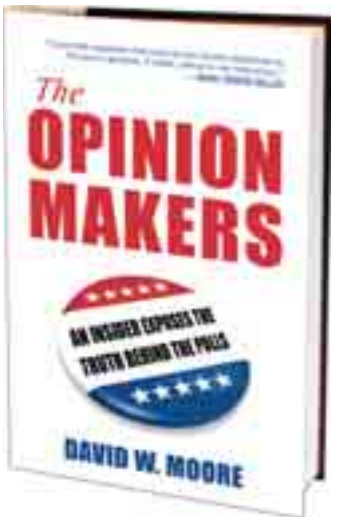
Iran has tried to make the occupation of Iraq as difficult as possible for US forces, but it has not been the major cause of violence against US troops. Most of these attacks have come from Sunni insurgents, who are deeply hostile to Iran. Even though Tehran has helped supply some Shiite militias hostile to the US occupation, Iran does not want to do anything that would destabilize the current Shiite-led government, with which it has very close relations. Like it or not, both Tehran and Washington back the current Shiite-dominated government in Iraq.

Commentators have focused too much attention on the statements of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has little influence over foreign affairs. Iran is not ideologically wedded to an anti-American position. It supported the Bush administration's 2001 overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and in 2003 it made a diplomatic overture to Washington, which put on the table such sensitive issues as Iran's support for anti-Israeli militant groups and a de facto acceptance of Israel's right to exist, in return for the normalization of US-Iranian relations. By virtue of its size and power, Iran wants to play a larger role in regional relations, and it sees Washington's policy of isolating and punishing it as an obstacle to this goal. Change American policy to engage Iran, and the rationale for some of its anti-American policies would disappear while pressure within Iran for a different regional approach would increase.

Myth 5. To talk to the leaders of "rogue" states like Iran and Cuba without conditions legitimizes their position and weakens American leverage.

McCain has attacked Obama for saying that he would be willing to meet with the leaders of Iran, Syria, Venezuela, Cuba and North Korea without conditions. Although Obama later qualified his position, his willingness to engage US adversaries and use bilateral and multilateral diplomacy offers a clear alternative to McCain's almost unconditional hostility to any kind of diplomacy.

McCain's position of refusing to meet with such leaders without conditions ignores a long, albeit uneven, bipartisan tradition of direct negotiations with our enemies, a tradition that runs from Kennedy to Nixon to Reagan. It also ignores the abysmal record of trying to isolate "rogue" states with the goal of regime change. The Castro brothers in Cuba have outlasted nine, soon to be ten, US presidents. And more than seven years of refusing to talk with Tehran has only left Iran stronger and closer to a nuclear bomb. By contrast, the Bush administration's



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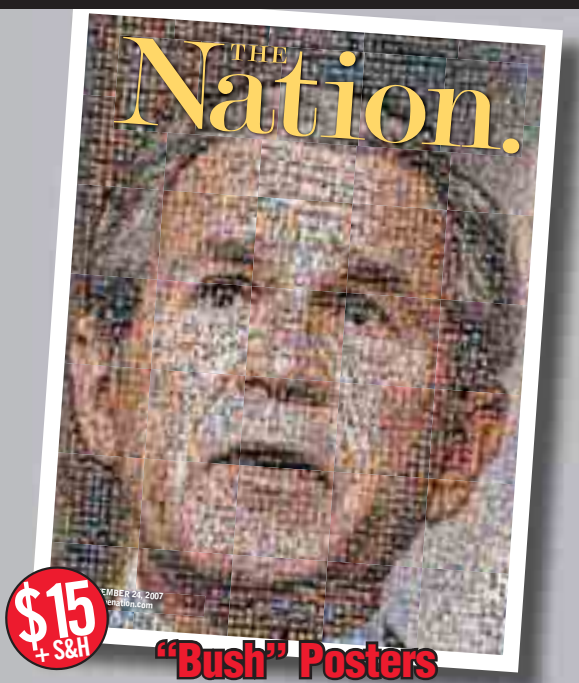

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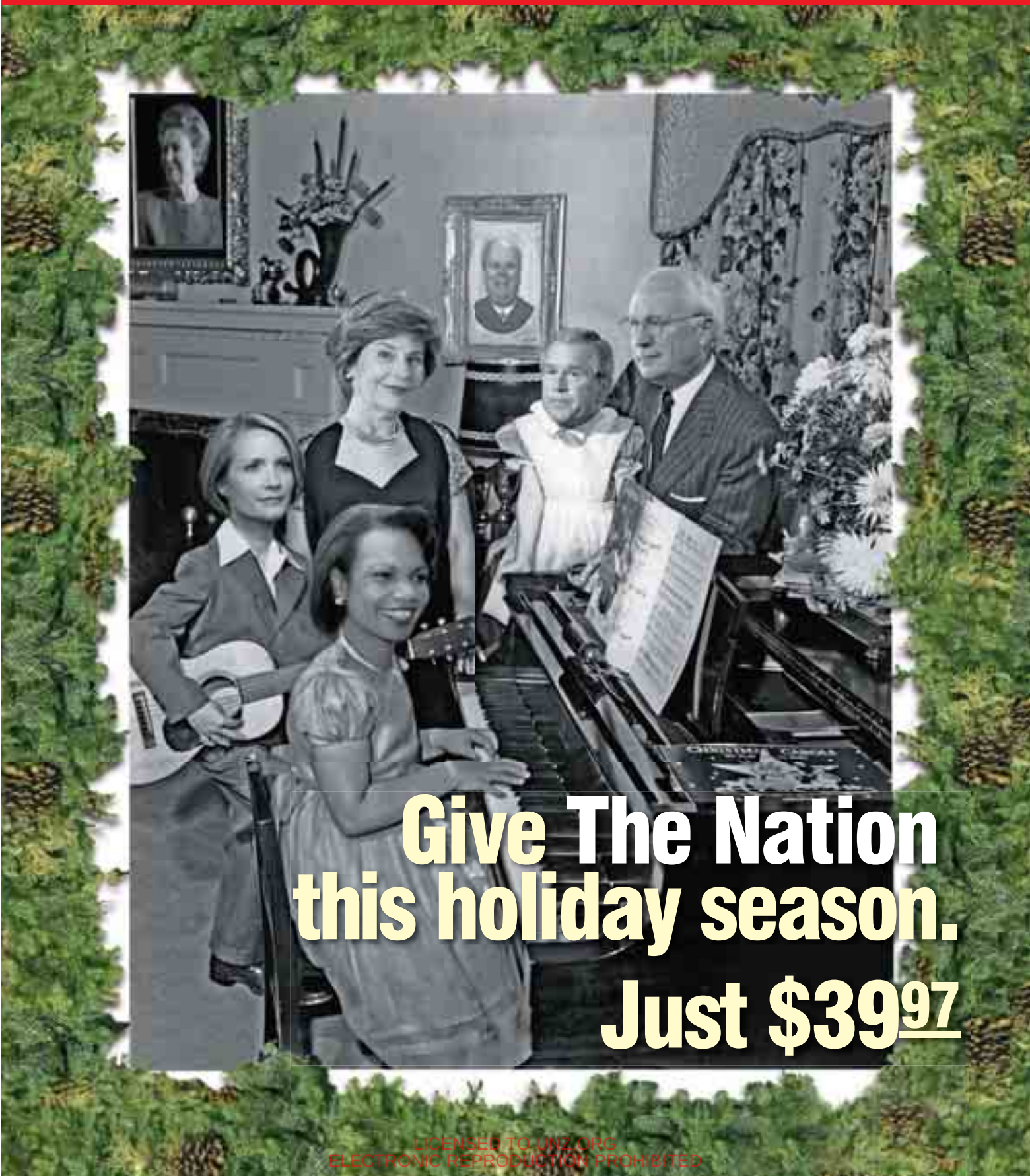

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decision to participate directly in the six-power talks and to drop earlier conditions led to the successful agreement with North Korea to dismantle its nuclear program.

As our experience with North Korea makes clear, however, to talk or not to talk misses the main point. The key question is not whether the president will meet with other leaders, "rogue" or not, but whether the United States will use diplomacy effectively to achieve US objectives. In many cases that diplomacy will not be head-to-head meetings with other leaders but good-faith participation in multilateral forums such as the six-power talks. In most cases, the United States will have far more to gain by participating without conditions than by creating conditions to avoid negotiations.

Myth 6. Vladimir Putin's Russia is an authoritarian state pursuing an anti-American agenda aimed at reconstituting the Soviet Union in the form of a new Russian empire.

McCain has seized on the crisis in Georgia to advance this alarmist view and to push his policy of ejecting Russia from the G-8 and expanding NATO to include Georgia and Ukraine. Obama initially took a more nuanced position toward the crisis but has recently joined McCain in promising NATO membership to Georgia. McCain's characterization of Russia is wrong for two reasons.

First, Russia's foreign policy has not been anti-American. Moscow has cooperated with Washington on a number of important international issues, from assisting NATO against the Taliban in Afghanistan and supporting Washington's counterterrorism efforts, to joining the coalition to curb Iran's nuclear enrichment program.

Second, what McCain sees as a pattern of intimidation to re-establish the Russian empire more objective analysts see as a great power protecting its legitimate interests in the face of US provocations. These provocations started during the Clinton administration and have increased under Bush, with the expansion of NATO to Russia's border and abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. They have continued with the promise of NATO membership to Georgia and Ukraine and the decision to deploy a missile defense system in Central Europe. Yet Moscow has responded for the most part in a measured and defensive way, its most forceful move being the recent military actions in Georgia to protect South Ossetia. When the Georgian president, Mikheil Saakashvili, sent forces into South Ossetia in violation of an earlier agreement, Russia responded much as the United States did when it intervened in 1999 against Serbia over Kosovo. Russian military actions in Georgia may have been disproportionate, but not as disproportionate as Washington's extensive bombing of Serbia proper.

Despite the souring of the earlier cooperative relationship with the Bush administration, Russia has made it clear that it would still prefer a strategic partnership that would reduce nuclear weapons, contain Islamist extremism and expand the world's oil and gas supplies. But it has also made it clear that this partnership must be based on mutual interests and compromise, not simply on Russian acquiescence in American dictates.

Myth 7. Because the American military is stretched thin by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we must increase the size of our conventional armed forces.

Both presidential candidates have come out with proposals to increase conventional forces. But these proposals are based on mistaken notions of the utility of military power and which military missions we must pursue to protect national security and contribute to world order.

The long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have indeed ground down the military and limited our ability to respond to other potential threats. But the problem is not that we spend too little or have too few forces. After all, the military budget, now almost $600 billion, is almost as large as the combined military budgets of the rest of the world. We outspend China by a factor of ten to one, Russia by sixteen to one and Iran by almost ninety times. Rather, the problem lies with the Bush administration's military missions and its forward-based strategy. In addition to the traditional missions of deterrence and defense of sea lanes, national security strategy now calls for the use of force to effect regime change and to fight counterinsurgency wars. It also envisions expansion of American military bases throughout much of the greater Middle East.

> The world does not need strong US leadership so much as it needs constructive US participation as a great power.

The lesson we should draw from our experience in Iraq and Afghanistan is not that we need more conventional forces but that the missions of regime change and counterinsurgency are—in addition to being illegal, in the case of the former, and unethical—not essential to US interests and cannot be achieved at acceptable cost. Furthermore, we should have learned from the stationing of forces in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s that positioning US troops in or near Muslim countries can fuel radical movements that create new threats to US security. The better course of action would be to wind down the counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and reduce America's heavy footprint in the Islamic world, thereby freeing resources for more urgent domestic and international needs.

Myth 8. A League of Democracies would create a global coalition for peace and freedom and would enable the United States and its democratic allies to intervene to solve humanitarian and other crises when the UN Security Council is paralyzed.

The creation of a League of Democracies is one of the central pillars of McCain's foreign policy. Several leading Obama advisers, including former Clinton National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and Ivo Daalder of the Brookings Institution, also support the idea. Despite its bipartisan appeal, the notion has several insuperable problems.

First, many leading democracies would be reluctant to join such a league because it would exclude China and Russia and undermine the UN. And after their difficult experience with the

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Bush administration over Iraq, many of these same countries would not welcome another high-profile US initiative that seeks to tie democracy promotion to Washington's national security agenda.

Second, a League of Democracies would be no more effective than other organizations in solving humanitarian problems like those in Burma and Darfur or in preventing nuclear proliferation. Large, newly developed democracies like Brazil, India, Mexico, Indonesia and South Africa are as protective of national sovereignty as China and Russia, in some cases more so, and are unlikely to support US-led interventions. And a League of Democracies would weaken more inclusive organizations, like the UN Security Council, thereby making it more difficult to solve the many international conflicts that would require China's and Russia's cooperation.

Third, the promotion of a League of Democracies would be polarizing and would create a global divide between a group of self-selected democracies and more authoritarian governments. This would reverse a twenty-year process of integrating China and Russia into the international system and reducing great power conflicts. It would also likely provoke efforts by China and Russia to strengthen organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as geopolitical alliances to counterbalance the West.

The best way to advance peace and security is to breathe new life into the UN by reforming the Security Council to better reflect today's realities. In particular, that means enlarging the council to include emerging powers like India and Brazil. We need a more inclusive global forum that enables major—and minor—powers to deal with common problems, not a less inclusive new organization that through exclusion would make common action more difficult.

Myth 9. Globalization has strengthened the economy, and we cannot avoid it by hiding behind protectionist walls.

Free-trade Republicans associated with McCain and neoliberal Democrats seeking to influence Obama's economic policies regularly trot out this notion to tar, as "protectionists" and "defeatists," progressives who question current trade and investment policies. They go on to argue that American prosperity depends on embracing free trade and globalization.

But the global integration of the past decade has not benefited the US economy. This is most evident in the erosion of America's tradable goods sector, as reflected by the large trade deficit and by the loss of millions of middle-class manufacturing jobs. It is also evident in the decline in family incomes over the past seven years despite rising worker productivity and by the increase in income and wealth inequality to levels not seen since the 1920s.

The problem is not with the idea of global economic integration per se but with the policies that have been pursued in its name. These policies have shortchanged investment at home by catering to the interests of Wall Street at the expense of Main Street and have indulged in the unfair trade practices of neo-mercantilist economies, which suppress workers' wages and thus the basic needs of their populations.

The pattern of economic growth these policies produced is undesirable as well as unsustainable. It is not sustainable because it was too dependent on debt-financed consumption and a series of asset bubbles in the United States, which in part were caused by the oversaving and underconsumption of production-oriented economies like China's and Japan's. With the bursting of the housing and credit bubbles, US consumers are no longer in a position to be the main driver of world economic growth. Other large economies will have to do more to provide their own demand.

Thus the nature of global economic integration will change, and with it the structure and rules of the global economy. The goal must not be to preserve free trade as it was practiced over the past decade or so but to create a global system of trade and finance built on rising wages and growing middle classes in developed and developing economies. Above all, American prosperity depends not on preserving globalization and free trade but on improving the quality of our infrastructure, enhancing the skills of our workers, strengthening our institutions of science and research, and reforming our financial system to serve the real economy.

Myth 10. The world needs American leadership.

The call for the United States to lead the world is a staple of both political campaigns. Yet understandably, much of the rest of the world is more skeptical, if not outright resistant, to Washington's global leadership than at any time since the end of World War II. What has passed as leadership in recent years too often has been swollen rhetoric about American greatness and pious dictates about how other countries should organize their economic and political systems, not leadership to solve common problems. Indeed, on issues where American leadership has been most needed, like resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reducing nuclear weapons or halting global climate change, Washington has been largely absent or downright obstructionist.

On these issues, American leadership will still be required in the period ahead. But to say that the world needs our leadership ignores the fact that much of the rest of the planet—China, India, Russia, South Korea, the countries of Latin America, even our European allies—has become accustomed to a world in which the United States has been preoccupied with Iraq and in which the rest has had more freedom to shape the politics and economies of their regions. And much of the world has done just fine without American leadership.

Neither campaign has grasped the central lesson of the Bush era: the world does not need strong US leadership so much as it needs constructive US participation as a great power. On a whole range of global issues, from climate change to stopping North Korea's nuclear program—even on the question of a peace between Israel and Syria—other powers and new coalitions of transnational NGOs and intergovernmental agencies have become leaders and have an ownership stake. They would welcome the United States to the fold, but they would not cede all leadership to Washington. Indeed, they understand that there will be clear limits to American power and leadership in the years ahead, as the United States digests the cost of its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The challenge for the next administration, then, is not how to restore American leadership but how to share these responsibilities in an increasingly multipolar world, and thus free up the energy and resources needed to rebuild American society. ■

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Railroading Immigrants

Massive workplace raids are part of a pressure campaign for guest-worker programs.

by DAVID BACON

A special Federal District court convenes every day at 1 PM in Tucson. All the benches, even the jury box, are filled with young people whose brown skin, black hair and indigenous features are common in a hundred tiny towns in Oaxaca or Guatemala. Their jeans, T-shirts and cheap tennis shoes show the dirt and wear from the long trek through northern Mexico, three days walking across the desert, and nights sleeping at the immigration detention center on the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

Presiding over one court session in June, Judge Jennifer Guerin called these defendants before her in groups of eight. They walked up in tiny waddling steps, heavy chains binding their ankles and wrists to their waists, and sat. Judge Guerin recited a litany of questions, translated into Spanish through headphones. "You've been charged with illegal entry, a criminal offense…at trial you would have the subpoena power of the court…you have certain rights," she intones. At the end she asks anyone who doesn't understand to stand up. No one does. She asks if they plead guilty. After a moment in which her question is translated, seventy voices mumble "*Sí*."

Leaving the courtroom a young woman stumbles, eyes streaked with tears. A public defender tells the judge her feet are covered with blisters from walking through the wilderness. A boy no older than 13 or 14 searches the room with his eyes as he's led away, perhaps seeking a friend or relative. No one seems older than 30, and most are much younger. They are today's border crossers—the mostly indigenous youth of southern Mexico and Central America.

They all plead guilty to a federal criminal charge. Sentences run from time served to six months in a federal lockup run by Corrections Corporation of America (CCA).

According to the Spanish news agency EFE, this new court process, dubbed Operation Streamline, convicted 5,187 migrants between January 14 and June 10. Isabel Garcia, who heads Derechos Humanos, a leading immigrants' rights organization in southern Arizona, says the current daily quota of seventy chained defendants will soon be raised to 100—fifty tried on one shift, fifty on another. Twenty-one new federal prosecutors will handle the surge, with CCA detention facilities to house it.

A new bureaucracy is growing rapidly, thanks to drastic changes in immigration law enforcement. In past decades, migrants were treated very differently when caught without papers. They were allowed to leave voluntarily or were deported after being found guilty of an administrative infraction, the equivalent of a parking ticket.

DAVID BACON

An undocumented worker is deported at the Mexicali border crossing.

Today's migrants are being treated as criminals. The features pioneered in Tucson's courtroom—serious federal criminal charges, mass trials of defendants in chains and incarceration—are becoming standard features of immigration raids from Postville, Iowa, to Los Angeles. State laws supplement federal statutes, and federal, state and local authorities cooperate closely to bring a large variety of criminal charges against migrants.

The vast increase in workplace raids has gone hand in hand with a pressure campaign designed to win passage of an immigration reform package centered on guest-worker programs. In December 2006, 1,282 workers were detained by hundreds of heavily armed Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in military garb at six Swift packinghouses. Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff told reporters that raids would show Congress the need for "stronger border security, effective interior enforcement and a temporary-worker program." President Bush wants, Chertoff said, "a program that would allow businesses that need foreign workers, because they can't otherwise satisfy their labor needs, to be able to get those workers in a regulated program." In July Chertoff explained to the *New York Times*, "We are not going to be able to satisfy the American people on a legal temporary-worker program until they are convinced that we will have a stick as well as a carrot." His carrot is the prospect of massive contract labor programs for business. The sticks are the chains in the Tucson courtroom.

According to Garcia, each day's defendants are less than 10 percent of those picked up on the Arizona border. "They're making an example of them to create a climate of fear," she charges. "We are a laboratory. The model they're developing in Arizona is coming everywhere."

Garcia's statements have made her a target of right-wing talk-radio hosts, who routinely urge listeners to call the county executive to get her fired from her job as a public defender. But her warnings proved prescient in Postville, where Tucson's assembly-line justice was transplanted virtually intact.

David Bacon, a writer and photographer based in California, is the author of Illegal People: How Globalization Creates Migration and Criminalizes Immigrants *(Beacon).* *Research support for this article was provided by the Investigative Fund of The Nation Institute.*

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On May 12 ICE agents swooped down on workers at the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant. Twenty minutes after the shift started, Maria Rosala Mejia Marroquin saw people running past the line where she stood cutting chicken breasts, shouting that *la migra* was in the plant. She ran too and tried to squeeze between huge boxes in a dark warehouse. "Men came in with flashlights. One pointed a gun in my face, shouting, 'No one will escape!'" she remembered. When she was interrogated, she told agents she had a daughter in childcare but lied to keep them from knowing where the baby sitter lived, fearing she'd be picked up as well. Agents finally strapped an electronic monitoring device onto her ankle, telling her she had to wait for a hearing.

Her brother Luz Eduardo was taken with 388 others to the National Cattle Congress, a livestock showground in Waterloo, two hours away. In a makeshift courtroom they went before a judge who'd helped prosecutors design Tucson-style plea agreements five months before the raid took place. In order to get a job at Agriprocessors, workers had given the company Social Security numbers that were either invented or belonged to someone else. The judge and prosecutor told workers they'd be charged with aggravated identity theft, which carries a two-year prison jolt, and held without bail. If they pleaded guilty to misusing a Social Security number, however, they would serve just five months and be deported immediately afterward.

"They told [my brother] if he signed the papers they'd deport him, but it was a lie," Mejia says. "He didn't know he was agreeing to criminal charges, and now he's been in prison in Kansas for months." Translation into Spanish was provided, but according to Elida Tuchan, who was also arrested, about half the detainees speak only Cachiquel, an indigenous language from San Miguel Dueñas, their Guatemalan hometown. "They felt terrorized, that everything was against them. They didn't understand anything about the process or their rights."

Workplace raids have been sweeping the country. According to Secretary Chertoff, "arrests in worksite cases have jumped from a total of 850 in 2004 to 4,940 last year, including 863 arrests based on criminal charges." From January 1 to May 31 alone, ICE arrested 3,000 people for immigration violations and 875 more on criminal charges.

On August 25 ICE agents raided a Howard Industries plant in Laurel, Mississippi, sending 481 workers to a privately run detention center in Jena, Louisiana, and releasing 106 women for "humanitarian reasons," most in ankle bracelets. While workers taken to Jena weren't hustled before a judge, as they had been in Postville, a week after the raid they were still incarcerated, many with no idea where they were being held. ICE spokeswoman Barbara Gonzalez declined to say how much longer detention would last. Federal prosecutors charged eight with felony identity theft, and Gonzalez said criminal charges might be brought against the others.

Patricia Ice of the Mississippi Immigrants' Rights Alliance (MIRA) called the raid political. "They want a mass exodus of immigrants out of the state, the kind we've seen in Arizona and Oklahoma," she declared. "The political establishment here is threatened by Mississippi's changing demographics and what the electorate might look like in twenty years." In the past two decades, the percentage of African-Americans in the state's population has stabilized at more than 35 percent. Immigrants, who were statistically insignificant until recently, are expected to

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reach 10 percent in the next decade. Jim Evans, state AFL-CIO staffer, leader of the legislature's Black Caucus and MIRA board chair, says the state sanctions law (which makes it a felony for someone without papers to hold a job) and the raid serve the same objective. "They are both efforts to drive a wedge between immigrants, African-Americans, white people and unions—all those who want political change here." At the same time, he says, "they make it easier to exploit workers. The people who profit from Mississippi's low-wage system want to keep it the way it is." He points to the fact that while workers without papers now risk fines, prison time and deportation, Mississippi employers have hired thousands of guest workers.

Two weeks before the Mississippi raid, Chertoff made the same connection. "There's obviously a straightforward solution to the problem of illegal work," he said, "which is, you open the front door and you shut the back door.... Congress wasn't willing to open the front door.... In the interim, to be honest, we're closing the back door.... I think it's a necessary condition to satisfy the American people that when the front door is opened, we will really bring people only through the front door." Closing the back door is a euphemism for immigration raids. Opening the front door means guest-worker programs.

This agenda for immigration reform has emerged out of a policy framework forged by some of the country's largest corporations.

This agenda for immigration reform has emerged out of a policy framework forged by some of the country's largest corporations. In 1999 a group of corporate trade associations, in industries employing large numbers of immigrant workers, formed the Essential Worker Immigration Coalition because US industry, it said, faced a huge labor shortage. "Part of the solution," EWIC announced, "involves allowing companies to hire foreign workers to fill the essential worker shortages."

The group, headed by the US Chamber of Commerce, includes the American Meat Institute, the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (Wal-Mart is a member), the National Council of Chain Restaurants and other industry associations—which are major campaign contributors (in the 2000 election cycle, the meat-processing industry gave $145,500 to Democrats and $1.14 million to Republicans; so far this year, the restaurant industry has given $2.9 million to Democrats and $4.4 million to Republicans).

In an August 2001 letter to Bush, EWIC argued for "a temporary worker framework that provides a role for such workers whose labor is needed in the US." When a 2002 Cato Institute report said a huge temporary visa program "should be created that would allow Mexican nationals to remain in the United States to work for a limited period," EWIC immediately embraced it. The Bush administration issued proposals a year and a half later that were identical to those in the report. Cato's ties to the media helped guest-worker proposals achieve greater legitimacy. When Cato asserted that the problem facing US companies was a shortage of workers rather than their unwillingness to pay higher wages to attract workers, much of the media treated this as fact. Cato and EWIC members shared an aversion to minimum wages. Rob Rosado, director of legislative affairs for the American Meat Institute, said, "We don't want the government setting wages [in guest-worker programs]. The market determines wages."

EWIC's ideas were embraced by most Democrats as well as Republicans, who dismissed as "politically unrealistic" an immigration bill sponsored by Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and members of the Congressional Black Caucus that did not contain a guest-worker program. Meanwhile, John Gay, representing the National Restaurant Association at EWIC, became board chair of the National Immigration Forum, a powerful immigrant-advocacy group in Washington. EWIC anchored a coalition with immigration lawyers, establishment civil rights organizations and several unions pushing for a reform package. And Tamar Jacoby, former staffer at the right-wing Manhattan Institute, organized a new corporate lobbying group, ImmigrationWorks USA, that includes EWIC, the National Council of La Raza, the National Restaurant Association and the US Chamber of Commerce.

The immigration reform bills introduced into Congress from 2005 onward, with crucial input from EWIC, linked guest-worker programs to heavy enforcement. Labor contractors would be allowed to recruit hundreds of thousands of workers a year outside the country, on temporary visas that would force them to leave if they became unemployed. The bills then mandated a tighter border to make crossing without papers more difficult, while beefed-up employer sanctions would make it impossible to work without a guest-worker visa.

"Enforcement is not an issue you can separate from guest-worker programs," says Mary Bauer, director of the Immigrant Justice Project at the Southern Poverty Law Center. An SPLC report, *Close to Slavery*, documents extensive abuse of workers in current programs and the benefit to employers of a workforce with few rights, whose vulnerable status makes organizing to raise wages difficult. "Immigration enforcement is structurally necessary for these programs," she explains. Most comprehensive bills contained legalization provisions for undocumented people but would have imposed fines and waiting periods from eleven to eighteen years, during which applicants would have a status similar to guest workers.

With Chertoff citing Congress's failure to pass Bush's reform package, the administration began to implement its enforcement proposals through increased raids. "We would have had raids with those bills too, because of their enforcement and funding provisions," says Marielena Hincapié, director of programs at the National Immigration Law Center (NILC).

The administration also used the bills' failure as a pretext for relaxing restrictions on current guest-worker programs, such as the requirement that employers demonstrate that they have tried to hire US workers first. ICE director Julie Myers told the Detroit Economic Club in April that "these changes will make it easier for agricultural employers to hire foreign temporary or seasonal labor to harvest crops."

The Southern Poverty Law Center, the AFL-CIO and immi-

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grants' rights groups have bitterly opposed these changes. Employers have generally supported them. "We see employers on the Hill all the time, saying they have to have guest workers. At one hearing they had to open extra rooms to accommodate all the lobbyists," Bauer fumes. "And support is coming, not just from Republicans but from Democrats like Barbara Mikulski, Zoe Lofgren, Ted Kennedy and even John Conyers."

Many supporters of tougher immigration enforcement claim that they have the interests of workers—both foreign-born and American—at heart. ICE asserts that raids and sanctions are intended to prevent employers from exploiting vulnerable undocumented workers. A week after the Postville raid, Myers said the ICE raids targeted "unscrupulous criminals who use illegal workers to cut costs and gain a competitive advantage." But in reality, very little is being done to enforce labor standards. On July 15 the Government Accountability Office charged that Labor Department inspectors routinely fail to investigate complaints and close half of them after short calls to employers. Between 1997 and 2007, the number of inspectors dropped from 942 to 732, and the number of cases went from 47,000 to 30,000, the lowest since World War II. Meanwhile, the budget for the Border Patrol has climbed to $3.5 billion, and its 15,000 employees make ICE the second-largest investigative government agency.

The current enforcement campaign is geared toward punishing workers, not employers. The affidavit supporting ICE's search warrant for the Postville plant stated that a source saw a supervisor "duct-tape the eyes of an undocumented Guatemalan worker shut and hit the Guatemalan with a meat hook," but the worker did not want to report the incident because "it would not do any good and could jeopardize his job." Although ICE would not identify the beaten worker or confirm his detention, it is probable that after the raid he was in federal prison, while the supervisor continued working, since none were taken to Waterloo. The Iowa Labor Commissioner documented fifty-seven cases of child labor at Agriprocessors and filed charges of numerous violations against the company. Although some workers may get temporary visas as witnesses, all will eventually be deported.

Not only do these tactics fail to protect labor standards; they often aid employers in resisting efforts by undocumented workers to improve their conditions. During a union-organizing drive at Smithfield's Tar Heel, North Carolina, packinghouse, two raids created a climate of fear, according to organizers. And when housekeepers at the Woodfin Suites in Emeryville, California, tried to enforce a new municipal living-wage law, ICE investigated them at the request of Republican Congressman Brian Bilbray and company president Samuel Hardage. A year before the raid in Postville, supervisors often used immigration status to threaten workers involved in a union drive at Agriprocessors, according to Mejia.

Scott Frotman, spokesman for the United Food and Commercial Workers, says that "raids let companies drive down wages and working conditions." To NILC's Marielena Hincapié, raids show the employers' power: "Enforcement intimidates even citizens and legal residents. The employer brings in another batch of workers and continues business as usual. People who protest get targeted and deported."

ICE has enlisted state and local authorities in its campaign to criminalize work. Last year Arizona passed bills requiring state employers to use the E-Verify system to ensure they were not hiring the undocumented. Employers must verify an applicant's immigration status with a database, which DHS said in 2007 "is still not sufficiently up-to-date to meet the…requirements for accurate verification." The original bill would have punished any employer with an undocumented employee, but after employers protested, the law was changed so that they would be fined only for future hiring.

E-Verify makes undocumented workers more vulnerable to exploitation. One woman employed in a Tucson bakery, who withheld her name, explained that she was getting $10 per hour for tending the oven, while legal residents were getting $16 for the same job. "If I leave or get fired, how will I find another job, with a bad Social Security number?" she wondered. A Tucson union organizer, also afraid to be identified, added that construction workers told her that contractors lowered wages from $18 to $10 per hour after the law passed, and told them to bring their own tools to the job. She described rising unemployment, with workers leaving for other states. "It's not going to stop us from organizing the union," she said, "but it will certainly make it harder."

Not only do these tactics fail to protect labor standards, they often aid employers in resisting efforts by workers to improve conditions.

In March, Arizona state police arrested eleven employees at a Tucson Panda Express restaurant for mismatched Social Security numbers. After the state prosecutor threatened felony identity theft charges, carrying long prison sentences, workers pleaded guilty to lesser charges and were sentenced to time served. Nevertheless, in August, two were still in jail, five months after the raid. As in Postville, deportation became a desirable outcome. Francisco Mondaca, who pleaded guilty to "impersonating a Panda worker," says, "I didn't hurt anyone. I filed W-2s and paid taxes. All I did was go to work." After the raid, Panda Express fired all its Arizona workers, according to one terminated employee, and brought in a new workforce. "The company knew we didn't have papers," he said. "Managers would talk about it." No action was taken against management.

On March 17 Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour signed SB 2988, which requires employers to use E-Verify and gives them immunity for hiring undocumented workers if they do. An undocumented worker, by contrast, faces felony charges carrying one to five years in prison and fines up to $10,000 for holding a job. Workers are ineligible for bail. At roadblocks near local chicken plants in Laurel, Mississippi, "They take us away in handcuffs and we have to pay over $1,000 to get out of jail and get our cars back," according to one worker, who asked that her name be withheld.

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Immigrants' rights organizations and unions have challenged this enforcement program with demonstrations and lawsuits. In Phoenix, county sheriff Joe Arpaio became a hero to nativist groups for invading immigrant communities with deputies, buses and helicopters, picking up people on the street and holding them for ICE. But when Arpaio brought in the Minutemen to support off-duty sheriff's deputies hired by M.D. Pruitt's furniture store to arrest day laborers, picket lines of workers, churches and immigrants' rights groups grew to more than a thousand people. "Even the Phoenix Police Department came out to protect us from him," says Pablo Alvarado, director of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network. "The mayor called for an FBI investigation, and the governor took $1.8 million from Arpaio's budget."

The United Food and Commercial Workers organized five hearings in response to the raids and filed a lawsuit to stop ICE from using warrants naming some individuals as a pretext for detaining many more, as it did at Swift. "Showing up for work should not subject workers to being detained," says UFCW president Joe Hansen. "Work is not a crime. Workers are not criminals. We do not leave our constitutional rights at the plant gate."

In California, the AFL-CIO, two central labor councils and one building trades council, the NILC and the ACLU filed suit in 2007 to stop ICE from issuing a new regulation, under which Social Security would have sent letters to more than 140,000 employers, listing the names of at least 8 million workers with mismatched numbers. Employers would have had to fire all who could not produce verifiable Social Security numbers. The order was blocked by US District Judge Maxine Chesney and remains on hold.

Just three days after the Mississippi raid, while many immigrants hid in their homes in fear, MIRA organizer Vicky Cintra and more than a hundred raid victims and family members marched down to the Howard Industries plant to demand withheld paychecks. When company managers called the police, who tried to arrest Cintra, immigrants began shouting, "Let her go!" As news reporters arrived on the scene, the police backed off. Seventy families got paychecks to keep them eating while their men were in immigration jail and their women were braceleted and unable to work.

Implementing its program by executive action, the administration has created a large bureaucracy, with rich contracts and high-paying jobs, to carry out the raids. Any new administration will thus inherit an entrenched program that enjoys considerable political momentum. Should John McCain be elected president, he is likely to embrace that program and continue the quest in Congress to weld the system developed under Bush into place. McCain co-sponsored the Kennedy-McCain bill, helping to set the terms for Washington's immigration debate. As Arizona senator he belongs to the establishment that made the state an enforcement testing ground.

Barack Obama has the chance to stop this juggernaut. At the AFL-CIO, Ana Avendaño, director of immigration programs, is drafting ideas for an Obama administration's first 100 days. "At the very least, it could change the regulations and terms of enforcement," she says, ending, for instance, the practice of charging undocumented immigrants with federal crimes like identity theft.

The larger question, however, is whether Obama would challenge the mushrooming enforcement bureaucracy and the raids it feeds on, and advocate a more humane system. Organizations like the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights urge that instead of the enforcement/guest worker/legalization triad, Congress should legalize people without papers and make more visas available for legal migration, without setting up guest-worker programs. The AFL-CIO, the network and many others want much greater enforcement of labor standards and union rights, and call for repealing employer sanctions. Instead of reinforcing the unequal status of millions of immigrants, or treating them as a cheap labor supply for corporate employers, immigration policy can and should protect the rights and living standards of immigrants—and workers generally. ■

McCain and the POW Cover-up

by SYDNEY H. SCHANBERG

Throughout his Senate career, the war hero has buried information about POWs left behind in Vietnam.

John McCain, who has risen to political prominence on his image as a Vietnam POW war hero, has, inexplicably, worked very hard to hide from the public stunning information about American prisoners in Vietnam who, unlike him, didn't return home. Throughout his Senate career, McCain has quietly sponsored and pushed into federal law a set of prohibitions that keep the most revealing information about these men buried as classified documents. Thus the war hero people would logically imagine to be a determined crusader for the interests of POWs and their families became instead the strange champion of hiding the evidence and closing the books.

Almost as striking is the manner in which the mainstream press has shied from reporting the POW story and McCain's role in it, even as McCain has made his military service and POW history the focus of his presidential campaign. Reporters who had covered the Vietnam War have also turned their heads and walked in other directions. McCain doesn't talk about the

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missing men, and the press never asks him about them.

The sum of the secrets McCain has sought to hide is not small. There exists a telling mass of official documents, radio intercepts, witness depositions, satellite photos of rescue symbols that pilots were trained to use, electronic messages from the ground containing the individual code numbers given to airmen, a rescue mission by a Special Forces unit that was aborted twice by Washington and even sworn testimony by two defense secretaries that "men were left behind." This imposing body of evidence suggests that a large number—probably hundreds—of the US prisoners held in Vietnam were not returned when the peace treaty was signed in January 1973 and Hanoi released 591 men, among them Navy combat pilot John S. McCain.

The Pentagon had been withholding significant information from POW families for years. What's more, the Pentagon's POW/MIA operation had been publicly shamed by internal whistleblowers and POW families for holding back documents as part of a policy of "debunking" POW intelligence even when the information was obviously credible. The pressure from the families and Vietnam veterans finally produced the creation, in late 1991, of a Senate "Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs." The chair was John Kerry, but McCain, as a POW, was its most pivotal member. In the end, the committee became part of the debunking machine.

Included in the evidence that McCain and his government allies suppressed or tried to discredit is a transcript of a senior North Vietnamese general's briefing of the Hanoi Politburo, discovered in Soviet archives by an American scholar in the 1990s. The briefing took place only four months before the 1973 peace accords. The general, Tran Van Quang, told the Politburo members that Hanoi was holding 1,205 American prisoners but would keep many of them at war's end as leverage to ensure getting reparations from Washington.

Throughout the Paris negotiations, the North Vietnamese tied the prisoner issue tightly to the issue of reparations. Finally, in a February 1, 1973, formal letter to Hanoi's premier, Pham Van Dong, Nixon pledged $3.25 billion in "postwar reconstruction" aid. The North Vietnamese, though, remained skeptical about the reparations promise being honored (it never was). Hanoi thus held back prisoners—just as it had done when the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and withdrew their forces from Vietnam. France later paid ransoms for prisoners and brought them home.

Two defense secretaries who served during the Vietnam War testified to the Senate POW committee in September 1992 that prisoners were not returned. James Schlesinger and Melvin Laird, secretaries of defense under Nixon, said in a public session and under oath that they based their conclusions on strong intelligence data—letters, eyewitness reports, even direct radio contacts. Under questioning, Schlesinger chose his words carefully, understanding clearly the volatility of the issue: "I think that as of now that I can come to no other conclusion…some were left behind."

Furthermore, over the years, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) received more than 1,600 firsthand reports of sightings of live American prisoners and nearly 14,000 secondhand accounts. Many witnesses interrogated by CIA or Pentagon intelligence agents were deemed "credible" in the agents' reports. Some of the witnesses were given lie-detector tests and passed. Sources provided me with copies of these witness reports. Yet the DIA, after reviewing them all, concluded that they "do not constitute evidence" that men were still alive.

There is also evidence that in the first months of Reagan's presidency, the White House received a ransom proposal for a number of POWs being held by Hanoi. The offer, which was passed to Washington from an official of a third country, was apparently discussed at a meeting in the Roosevelt Room attended by Reagan, Vice President George H.W. Bush, CIA director William Casey and National Security Adviser Richard Allen. Allen confirmed the offer in sworn testimony to the Senate POW committee on June 23, 1992.

Allen was allowed to testify behind closed doors, and no information was released. But a *San Diego Union-Tribune* reporter, Robert Caldwell, obtained the portion of the testimony relating to the ransom offer and wrote about it. The ransom request was for $4 billion, Allen testified. He said he told Reagan that "it would be worth the president going along and let's have the negotiation." When his testimony appeared in the *Union-Tribune*, Allen quickly wrote a letter to the panel, this time not under oath, recanting the ransom story, saying his memory had played tricks on him.

Evidence suggests that a large number of US prisoners were not returned in 1973 when Hanoi released 591, among them John S. McCain.

But the story didn't end there. A Treasury agent on Secret Service duty in the White House, John Syphrit, came forward to say he had overheard part of the ransom conversation in the Roosevelt Room in 1981. The Senate POW committee voted not to subpoena him to testify.

On November 11, 1992, Dolores Alfond, sister of missing airman Capt. Victor Apodaca and chair of the National Alliance of Families, an organization of relatives of POW/MIAs, testified at one of the Senate committee's public hearings. She asked for information about data the government had gathered from electronic devices used in a classified program known as PAVE SPIKE.

The devices were primarily motion sensors, dropped by air, designed to pick up enemy troop movements. But they also had rescue capabilities. Someone on the ground—a downed airman or a prisoner on a labor gang—could manually enter data into the sensor, which were regularly collected electronically by US planes flying overhead. Alfond stated, without any challenge from the committee, that in 1974, a year after the supposedly complete return of prisoners, the gathered data showed that a person or people had manually entered into the sensors—as US pilots had been trained to do—"no less than 20 authenticator numbers that corresponded exactly to the classified authenticator numbers of 20 US POW/MIAs who were lost in Laos." Alfond added, says the transcript: "This PAVE SPIKE intelligence is seamless, but the committee has not discussed it

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or released what it knows about PAVE SPIKE."

McCain, whose POW status made him the committee's most powerful member, attended that hearing specifically to confront Alfond because of her criticism of the panel's work. He bellowed and berated her for quite a while. His face turning anger-pink, he accused her of "denigrating" his "patriotism." The bullying had its effect—she began to cry.

After a pause Alfond recovered and tried to respond to his scorching tirade, but McCain simply turned and stormed out of the room. The PAVE SPIKE file has never been declassified. We still don't know anything about those 20 POWs.

The committee's final report, issued in January 1993, began with a forty-three-page executive summary—the only section that drew the mainstream press's attention. It said that only "a small number" of POWs could have been left behind in 1973. But the document's remaining 1,180 pages were quite different. Sprinkled throughout are findings that contradict and disprove the conclusions of the whitewashed summary. This insertion of critical evidence that committee leaders had downplayed and dismissed was the work of a committee staff that had opposed and finally rebelled against the cover-up.

McCain has regularly vilified POW truth seekers as 'hoaxers,' 'charlatans,' 'conspiracy theorists' and 'dime-store Rambos.'

Pages 207–209 of the report, for example, contain major revelations of what were either massive intelligence failures or bad intentions. These pages say that until the committee brought up the subject in 1992, no branch of the intelligence community that dealt with analysis of satellite and lower-altitude photos had ever been informed of the distress signals US forces were trained to use in Vietnam—nor had they ever been tasked to look for such signals from possible prisoners on the ground.

In a personal briefing in 1992, high-level CIA officials told me privately that as it became more and more difficult for either government to admit that it knew from the start about the unacknowledged prisoners, those prisoners became not only useless as bargaining chips but also a risk to Hanoi's desire to be accepted into the international community. The CIA officials said their intelligence indicated strongly that the remaining men—those who had not died from illness or hard labor or torture—were eventually executed. My own research has convinced me that it is not likely that more than a few—if any—are alive in captivity today. (That CIA briefing was conducted "off the record," but because the evidence from my reporting since then has brought me to the same conclusion, I felt there was no longer any point in not writing about the meeting.)

For many reasons, including the absence of a constituency for the missing men other than their families and some veterans' groups, very few Americans are aware of McCain's role not only in keeping the subject out of public view but in denying the existence of abandoned POWs. That is because McCain has hardly been alone in this hide-the-scandal campaign. The Arizona senator has actually been following the lead of every White House since Richard Nixon's and thus of every CIA director, Pentagon chief and National Security Adviser, among many others (including Dick Cheney, who was George H.W. Bush's defense secretary).

An early and critical attempt by McCain to conceal evidence involved 1990 legislation called the Truth bill, which started in the House. A brief and simple document, the bill would have compelled complete transparency about prisoners and missing men. Its core sentence said that the "head of each department or agency which holds or receives any records and information, including reports, which have been correlated or possibly correlated to United States personnel listed as prisoner of war or missing in action from World War II, the Korean conflict and the Vietnam conflict, shall make available to the public all such records held or received by that department or agency."

Bitterly opposed by the Pentagon (and thus by McCain), the bill went nowhere. Reintroduced the following year, it again disappeared. But a few months later a new measure, the McCain bill, suddenly appeared. It created a bureaucratic maze from which only a fraction of the documents could emerge—only the records that revealed no POW secrets. The McCain bill became law in 1991 and remains so today.

McCain was also instrumental in amending the Missing Service Personnel Act, which was strengthened in 1995 by POW advocates to include criminal penalties against "any government official who knowingly and willfully withholds from the file of a missing person any information relating to the disappearance or whereabouts and status of a missing person." A year later, in a closed House-Senate conference on an unrelated military bill, McCain, at the behest of the Pentagon, attached a crippling amendment to the act, stripping out its only enforcement teeth, the criminal penalties, and reducing the obligations of commanders in the field to speedily search for missing men and report the incidents to the Pentagon.

McCain argued that keeping the criminal penalties would have made it impossible for the Pentagon to find staffers willing to work on POW/MIA matters. That's an odd argument to make. Were staffers only "willing to work" if they were allowed to conceal POW records? By eviscerating the law, McCain gave his stamp of approval to the government policy of debunking the existence of live POWs.

McCain has insisted again and again that all the evidence has been woven together by unscrupulous deceivers to create an insidious and unpatriotic myth. He calls it the work of the "bizarre rantings of the MIA hobbyists." He has regularly vilified those who keep trying to pry out classified documents as "hoaxers," "charlatans," "conspiracy theorists" and "dime-store Rambos." Family members who have personally pressed McCain to end the secrecy have been treated to his legendary temper. In 1996 he roughly pushed aside a group of POW family members who had waited outside a hearing room to appeal to him, including a mother in a wheelchair.

The only explanation McCain has ever offered for his leadership on legislation that seals POW information is that he

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believes the release of such information would only stir up fresh grief for the families of those who were never accounted for in Vietnam. Of the scores of POW families I've met over the years, only a few have said they want the books closed without knowing what happened to their men. All the rest say that not knowing is exactly what grieves them.

It's not clear whether the taped confession McCain gave to his captors to avoid further torture has played a role in his postwar behavior. That confession was played endlessly over the prison loudspeaker system at Hoa Lo—to try to break down other prisoners—and was broadcast over Hanoi's state radio. Reportedly, he confessed to being a war criminal who had bombed a school and other civilian targets. The Pentagon has copies of the confessions but will not release them. Also, no outsider I know of has ever seen a nonredacted copy of McCain's debriefing when he returned from captivity, which is classified but can be made public by McCain.

In his bestselling 1999 autobiography, *Faith of My Fathers*, McCain says he felt bad throughout his captivity because he knew he was being treated more leniently than his fellow POWs, owing to his propaganda value (his high-ranking father, Rear Adm. John S. McCain II, was then the commander of US forces in the Pacific). Also in this memoir, McCain expresses guilt at having broken under torture and given the confession. "I felt faithless and couldn't control my despair," he writes, revealing that he made two "feeble" attempts at suicide. Tellingly, he says he lived in "dread" that his father would find out about the confession. "I still wince," he writes, "when I recall wondering if my father had heard of my disgrace."

McCain still didn't know the answer when his father died in 1981. He got his answer eighteen years later. In his 1999 memoir, the senator writes, "I only recently learned that the tape… had been broadcast outside the prison and had come to the attention of my father."

Does this hint at explanations for McCain's efforts to bury information about prisoners or other disturbing pieces of the Vietnam War? Does he suppress POW information because its surfacing rekindles his feelings of shame? On this subject, all I have are questions. But even without answers to what may be hidden in the recesses of someone's mind, one thing about the POW story is clear: if American prisoners were dishonored by being written off and left to die, that's something the American public ought to know about. ■

Progressive Fusion

To avert catastrophe, environmentalists must join forces with other movements for change.

by JAMES GUSTAVE SPETH

In 1970 James Gustave Speth co-founded the Natural Resources Defense Council, which has become one of America's most well-endowed and high-profile environmental organizations. He worked in the White House under President Carter, chairing the Council on Environmental Quality; when Bill Clinton and Al Gore were elected in 1992, Speth was a senior adviser to their transition team. He spent the 1990s as the administrator of the United Nations Development Program, where he integrated environmental sustainability into the agency's poverty-fighting mission. Thus, what follows—his call for a radical departure from the movement's current strategy—comes from the ultimate environmental insider. —*The Editors*

EMILY FLAKES

I grew up in a small town on the Edisto River in South Carolina in the 1940s and '50s. As a boy, I often swam the Edisto, though at first I could not buck the river's current. But as I grew older and stronger, I was able to make good headway against it. In my environmental work for close to four decades, I've always assumed America's environmental community would do the same—get stronger and prevail against the current. But in the past few years I have come to the conclusion that this assumption is incorrect. The environmental community has grown in strength and sophistication, but the environment has continued to deteriorate. The current has strengthened faster than we have and become more treacherous. It is time to consider what to do besides swimming against it.

It is no accident that environmental crisis is gathering as social injustice is deepening and growing inequality is impairing democratic institutions. Each is the result of a system of political

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economy—today's capitalism—that is profoundly committed to profits and growth and profoundly indifferent to nature and society. Left uncorrected, it is an inherently ruthless, rapacious system, and it is up to citizens, acting mainly through government, to inject human and natural values into that system. But this effort fails because progressive politics are too feeble and Washington is more and more in the hands of powerful corporations and great wealth. The best hope for change in America is a fusion of those concerned about the environment, social justice and strong democracy into one powerful progressive force. This fusion must occur before it is too late.

Sadly, while environmentalists have been winning many battles, we are losing the planet. Half the world's tropical and temperate forests are gone. The rate of deforestation in the tropics is about an acre a second. Half the planet's wetlands are gone. An estimated 90 percent of the large predator fish are gone and 75 percent of marine fisheries are overfished, fished to capacity or depleted, up from 5 percent a few decades ago. Twenty percent of the corals are gone; another 20 percent severely threatened. Species are disappearing about 1,000 times faster than normal. The planet has not seen such a spasm of extinction in 65 million years, since the dinosaurs disappeared. Each year desertification claims a Nebraska-sized area of productive capacity worldwide. Toxic chemicals can be found by the dozens in essentially every one of us.

Earth's ozone layer was severely depleted before the change was discovered. Human activities have pushed atmospheric carbon dioxide levels up by more than a third and have started the most dangerous change of all—planetary warming and climate disruption. Earth's ice fields are melting. Industrial processes are fixing nitrogen, making it biologically active, at a rate equal to nature's; one result is the development of hundreds of dead zones in the oceans because of overfertilization. Withdrawals of fresh water consume more than half of accessible runoff, and water shortages are multiplying here and abroad. The following rivers no longer reach the oceans in the dry season: the Colorado, Yellow, Ganges and Nile, among many others.

The United States—responsible for about 30 percent of the carbon dioxide added to the atmosphere—is, of course, deeply complicit in these global trends, and four decades of environmental effort have not stemmed the tide of decline. The United States is losing 6,000 acres of open space every day, and 100,000 acres of wetlands every year. Forty percent of US fish species are threatened with extinction, a third of plants and amphibians, 15 to 20 percent of birds and mammals. Half of US lakes and a third of the rivers still fail to meet the standards that the 1972 Clean Water Act said should be met by 1983, and a third of Americans live in counties that fail to meet EPA air-quality standards. We have done little to curb our wasteful energy habits or our steady population growth.

All we have to do to destroy the planet's climate and biota and leave a ruined world to our children and grandchildren is to keep doing exactly what we are doing, with no growth in the human population or the world economy. Just continue to release greenhouse gases at current rates, impoverish ecosystems and release toxic chemicals at current rates, and the world in the latter part of this century won't be fit to live in. But human activities are not holding at current levels—they are accelerating dramatically.

The world economy has more than quadrupled since 1960 and is projected to quadruple again by mid century. At recent rates of growth, it will double in fifteen to seventeen years. It took all of human history to grow the $7 trillion world economy of 1950. We now grow by that amount in a decade. Societies face the prospect of enormous environmental deterioration just when they need to be moving strongly in the opposite direction.

The escalating processes of climate disruption, biotic impoverishment and toxification—which continue despite decades of warnings and earnest effort—are a severe indictment of capitalism. Capitalism as it is constituted today produces an economy and politics that are highly destructive to the environment. An unquestioning commitment to economic growth at any cost, powerful corporations whose overriding objective is to grow by generating profits (including profits from avoiding the environmental costs they create, from amassing deep subsidies and benefits from government and from continued deployment of technologies designed with little regard for the environment), markets that fail to recognize environmental costs unless corrected by government, government that is subservient to corporate interests and the growth imperative, rampant consumerism spurred by sophisticated advertising and marketing, economic activity so large in scale that it alters the fundamental biophysical operations of the planet—all combine to deliver an ever growing world economy that is undermining the ability of the planet to sustain life.

Working only within the system will, in the end, not succeed. Transformative change in the system itself is needed.

Mainstream environmentalism has proved largely incapable of coping with these forces. It works within the system—raising public awareness, offering responsive policies, lobbying and litigating. America has run a forty-year experiment on whether this environmentalism can succeed, and the results are in. The full burden of managing accumulating environmental threats has fallen to the environmental community, both in and outside government. But that burden is too great. The system of modern capitalism will grow in size and complexity and will generate ever larger environmental consequences, outstripping efforts to cope with them. Indeed, the system will seek to undermine those efforts and constrain them within narrow limits. Working only within the system will, in the end, not succeed. Transformative change in the system itself is needed.

The fundamental questions thus are about transforming capitalism as we know it. Can it be done? If so, how? And if not, what then? The good news is that there are a variety of prescriptions to take the economy and the environment off a collision course and to transform economic activity into something benign and restorative. The

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most important of these prescriptions range far beyond the traditional environmental agenda.

Market failure can be corrected by government, perverse subsidies can be eliminated and environmentally honest prices can be forged. The laws, incentives and governance structures under which corporations operate can be transformed to move from shareholder primacy to stakeholder primacy. But even more vital is the need to challenge economic growth and the consumerism it depends on. This challenge is as relevant to addressing social problems as environmental ones.

The never-ending drive to grow the economy undermines families, jobs, communities, the environment, a sense of place and continuity, even national security—but we are told that, in the end, we will somehow be better off. America has not applied its growth dividend to meeting social and environmental needs. There is good evidence that increased incomes do not lead to greater satisfaction with life. In affluent countries we have what might be called uneconomic growth, to borrow Herman Daly's phrase, where, if one could total up all the costs of growth, they would outweigh the benefits.

Overriding commitment to economic growth—mere GDP growth—is consuming environmental and social capital, both in short supply. Affluent countries must become postgrowth societies where jobs and work life, the environment, communities and the public sector are no longer sacrificed to push up GDP.

Affluent countries must become postgrowth societies where the environment and the public sector are no longer sacrificed to push up GDP.

There are many steps to slow growth while improving social and environmental well-being, such as: shorter workweeks and longer vacations; greater labor protections, job security and benefits; restrictions on advertising; a new design for the twenty-first-century corporation; strong social and environmental provisions in trade agreements; rigorous environmental and consumer protection, including full-cost pricing; greater economic and social equality, with progressive taxation of the rich and greater income support for the poor; heavy spending on public services and environmental amenities; a huge investment in education, skills and new technology; and initiatives to address population growth at home and abroad.

Instead of merely pursuing GDP growth, we need policies that address social needs directly—that strengthen families and communities and address the breakdown of social connectedness and the erosion of social capital; that guarantee good, well-paying jobs (and green-collar ones); that provide for universal healthcare and alleviate the devastating effects of mental illness; that provide a good education for all; that ensure care and companionship for the chronically ill and incapacitated; that recognize responsibilities to the half of humanity who live in poverty. There are many things that need to grow, and policy should concentrate there. Such measures, wise in their own right, should be seen as environmental measures too: central parts of the alternative to the destructive path we are on.

Americans are struggling with the combined impacts of higher food and fuel prices, crumbling financial assets, tighter credit and layoffs. These problems are not the result of a slowdown in GDP growth, and they will not be cured by more growth. Each is the result of government failing to intervene in the marketplace—in financial markets, in housing markets, in labor markets and elsewhere. As with climate change, we are on the receiving end of misguided policies that have led to deep structural maladies.

High prices are a problem not because they are high but because people don't have the money, and alternatives (e.g., truly fuel-efficient vehicles) are not readily available. In a gutsy article in July, *Time* noted that $4 gas was curbing sprawl, reducing pollution and traffic deaths, increasing fuel efficiency, and stimulating public transport, bike sales and walking. Honest prices would be higher prices for many things, but that does not mean Exxon should pocket the difference or that equity issues should remain unaddressed.

Conventional wisdom on the clash of economy and environment is that we can have it both ways, thanks to new technology. We do indeed need a revolution in the technologies of energy, transportation, construction, agriculture and more. But the rate of technological change required to deal with environmental challenges in the face of rapid economic growth is extremely high and rarely achieved. If pollution is cut in half but output doubles, there is no net gain. Housing, appliances and transportation can become more energy-efficient, but the improvements will be overwhelmed if there are more cars, larger houses and new appliances—and there are. There's a limit to how fast and far new technology can take us.

Parallel to transcending our growth fetish, we must move beyond our consumerism and hyperventilating lifestyles. In the modern environmental era, there has been too little focus on consumption. This is slowly changing, but most mainstream environmentalists have not wanted to suggest that the positions they advocate would require serious personal changes. This reluctance to challenge consumption has been a big mistake, given the mounting environmental and social costs of American "affluenza," extravagance and wastefulness.

The good news is that more and more people sense that there's a great misdirection of life's energy. In a survey 83 percent of Americans say society is not focused on the right priorities, 81 percent say America is too focused on shopping and spending, 88 percent say American society is too materialistic, 74 percent believe excessive materialism is causing harm to the environment. If these numbers are correct, there's a powerful base to build on.

Psychological studies show that materialism is toxic to happiness and that more income and more possessions do not lead to a lasting sense of well-being or satisfaction with life. What make people happy are warm personal relationships and giving rather than getting. Many people are trying to fight back against consumerism and commercialization. They say, Confront consumption. Practice sufficiency. Create social environments where overconsumption is viewed as silly, wasteful, ostentatious.

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Create commercial-free zones. Buy local. Eat slow food. Simplify your life. Downshift.

These prescriptions for change in the fundamental arrangements of capitalism are difficult, to put it mildly. What circumstances might make deep change plausible? A mounting sense of imminent crisis, wise leadership, the articulation of a new American narrative or story, as Bill Moyers has urged—all these would help. Most of all, we need a new politics and new social movement powerful enough to drive change.

Environmentalists must join social progressives to address the crisis of inequality unraveling our social fabric and undermining democracy. It is a crisis of soaring executive pay, huge incomes and increasingly concentrated wealth for a small minority while poverty rates approach a thirty-year high, wages stagnate despite rising productivity, social mobility and opportunity decline, the number of people without health insurance soars, job insecurity increases, safety nets shrink and Americans have the longest working day of all the rich countries. In an America with such vast social insecurity, where half the families just get by, economic arguments, even misleading ones, trump environmental ones.

Environmentalists must also join those seeking to reform politics and strengthen democracy. America's gaping social and economic inequality poses a grave threat to democracy. We are seeing the emergence of a vicious circle: income disparities shift political access and influence to wealthy constituencies and large businesses, which further imperils the potential of the democratic process to act to correct the economic disparities. Corporations have been the principal economic actors for a long time; now they are the principal political actors as well. Neither environment nor society fares well under corporatocracy. Environmentalists need to embrace public financing of elections, lobbying regulation, nonpartisan Congressional redistricting and other reforms as a core of their agenda. Today's politics will never deliver environmental sustainability.

My point of departure was the momentous environmental challenge we face. But today's environmental reality is linked powerfully with other realities, including growing social inequality and neglect and the erosion of democratic governance and popular control. So my conclusion is that we as citizens must mobilize our spiritual and political resources for transformative change on all three fronts. Our best hope for change is a fusion of those concerned about environmental sustainability, social justice and political democracy into one progressive force.

One area where fusion is beginning is the conversation between environmental and social justice activists on solutions, including green-collar ones, to the climate change threat. That's encouraging, but it's a small part of what's needed. Mostly, everyone is still in his or her silo. A sustained dialogue is urgently needed among the three communities, to build a common agenda for action and a shared commitment to build a new social movement for change in America. We are all communities of a shared fate. We will rise or fall together. ■

Letters

(continued from page 2)

Sugrue Replies

Philadelphia

I have been called a lot of names, but never "misogynist." Surely Kenneth Pitchford's serious charge must be warranted on the reading of more than a single sentence in a lengthy book review. John McCain is a misogynist. I am not.

Pitchford suggests that the 1968 Atlantic City Miss America protest was a "historic breakthrough." I think not. Feminist victories were and are the result of a long struggle, grassroots organizing and policy-making that began a long time before 1968. Women's suffrage was a historic breakthrough. The unionization of women workers in retail, public employment and the health professions was a historic breakthrough. The inclusion of sex discrimination in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a historic breakthrough. The shop-floor and union hall efforts of women workers to get Title VII enforced was a historic breakthrough. The legalization of abortion and the expansion of reproductive freedom was a historic breakthrough. The efforts of hundreds of thousands of poor women to expand welfare rights in the late 1960s and early '70s was a historic breakthrough. The creation of a women's health movement and the slow, still-unfinished transformation of the male-dominated medical profession was a historic breakthrough. Crowning a sheep Miss America was not.

The consequences of events like the Atlantic City protest are a reminder of how fickle an ally the media can be. Many in the '60s left assumed that publicity would translate into power, and as a result spent more time angling for the camera than engaging in the tiresome everyday work of organizing and institution-building that is *the* necessary prerequisite for enduring social change. And while the media mostly ignored the countless unheralded acts of grassroots activism that made feminism real, the right brilliantly used televised images of protest—including the alleged "bra burners" (no bra was burned in Atlantic City)—to distort and discredit the left. I see that legacy in the classroom. Most of my students, male and female, disown feminism. They have a narrow understanding of the movement, based on the media's disproportionate attention to one narrow, if telegenic, segment of a much larger movement.

That is not to diminish the historical significance of radical feminists, many of whom engaged in the hard work of setting up woman-run clinics, establishing women's centers at universities and writing powerfully about patriarchy and sexuality. When radical feminists allied with other women's groups, they made a big difference. But Pitchford misreads history to downplay the often deep rifts that divided many radical and liberal feminists; alienated black, white and Latina feminists from each other; and led many working-class women to reject the label "feminism" altogether.

Lost in Pitchford's account—and most histories—of the '60s is that the majority of feminists and feminist-sympathetic women did not have time for theatrical protest. They were getting up at 6 AM and putting on their work clothes before making breakfast, packing their children's lunchboxes and heading to work themselves, usually to insecure, underpaid blue- and pink-collar jobs. Their struggle is the one that we should care about most—and it's the one that gets lost in celebrity-obsessed and media-focused histories. Addressing the plight of women as workers and caregivers—here and around the globe—is the future of feminism.

Thomas J. Sugrue

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Books & the Arts.

Inconvenient Truths

by STEVEN EPSTEIN

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Delegates marching at the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City on August 2

In April 1985, more than 2,000 people from thirty countries made their way to Atlanta for the world's first International AIDS Conference. The epidemic was four years old, and President Ronald Reagan had not yet uttered the name of the disease in public. There were no treatments for HIV infection. The next year, William F. Buckley Jr. would propose in an op-ed in the *New York Times* that "everyone detected with AIDS should be tattooed in the upper forearm, to protect common-needle users, and on the buttocks, to prevent the victimization of other homosexuals." In Atlanta, conferencegoers noted the "remarkable mixture of participants," which reflected, even by this early date, how different the politics surrounding AIDS was from that of most other medical conditions. "Doctors and scientists of almost every discipline [were] rubbing elbows with gay activists and media personalities," according to the newsletter of a gay doctors' group.

Over the years, as a hybrid and increasingly global mix of AIDS warriors has pursued prevention, treatments and social change, the international conference has found its way to Berlin, Barcelona and Bangkok, to Yokohama, Durban and Toronto. (The United States may soon be back on the list as a potential host, now that Congress has removed the statutory basis for an infamous ban on the entry of HIV-positive people into the country.) This August marked the seventeenth such event, with 24,000 participants from 194 countries converging on the giant Centro Banamex in Mexico City. What has remained constant over the years is how this hyperkinetic and multifaceted convocation—part celebrity showcase, part media circus, part pharma trade show, part networking extravaganza, part activist stage and, yes, part scientific meeting—has seemed to embody central elements of the AIDS phenomenon. It has shown clearly how the response to AIDS has taken shape as a heterogeneous global industry, and it has raised the perennial question of who really "owns" AIDS and thereby gets to say what should be done about it. And as the tally of infection has climbed upward over the years, the conference has also epitomized the ultimate limitations of the now vast and impressive scientific and political campaigns being waged against this epidemic.

As early as 1990, the activist and scholar Cindy Patton described, in her book *Inventing AIDS*, the emergence and worrisome growth of an "AIDS industry" that seemed to have taken on a bureaucratic life of its own and imposed its monolithic vision of the problem and its solutions. In *The Wisdom of Whores*, AIDS industry insider Elizabeth Pisani airs the latest dirty laundry. A journalist turned epidemiologist who has consulted for governments and NGOs around the world and particularly throughout Asia, Pisani holds a dim view of business as usual by the AIDS establishment, from the global health agencies on down. In this bracing account, Pisani is especially concerned about the impact of the recent flood of funding—by 2007, she notes, global expenditures on HIV in developing countries had reached $10 billion a year, more than has ever been spent on a single disease—which inevitably draws in "people who don't really care about the problem, who are truly queasy about sex and drugs, but who want some of the cash." In this "Be careful what you wish for" story, Pisani claims that now that AIDS has become a "boom industry," we've learned that "money can actually be an obstacle to doing the right thing."

Pisani has written a first-person narrative that brings the reader along on her odyssey through a range of distinctive subcultures in which she has found herself in recent years, from the number crunchers in the corridors of UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS) in Geneva to the transgender sex workers doing HIV prevention on the streets of Jakarta. And it is clear from the outset that Pisani is not just a character in her own book but also very much a "character." She presents herself as brash, quirky, salty, spicy, tart and unapologetically blunt—a "flame-throwing epidemiologist" (as advertised in the publicity materials) who, OK, may be a bit of a nerd but is plenty of fun to hang

The Wisdom of Whores

Bureaucrats, Brothels and the Business of AIDS.
By Elizabeth Pisani.
Norton. 372 pp. $25.95.

Sizwe's Test

A Young Man's Journey Through Africa's AIDS Epidemic.
By Jonny Steinberg.
Simon & Schuster. 349 pp. $26.

Steven Epstein, professor of sociology at the University of California, San Diego, is the author of Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge *(California) and* Inclusion: The Politics of Difference in Medical Research *(Chicago).*

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out with, gossiping over drinks. The elaboration of this persona—the brainy "bad girl" insider/outsider—is then meant to warrant her credibility as someone who can really lay it on the line, take on every sacred cow and puncture the pretensions of political correctness whenever and wherever they appear.

This gambit makes for good reading and, sometimes, useful interventions in the policy arena. Pisani details the absurdities of Bush-era funding priorities—manifested, in one case, in a reporting requirement to document the "number of faith-based laboratories" available to provide HIV testing. And who could object to her questioning of policies that force USAID to buy condoms in Alabama and ship them to Indonesia, India and China, where they could have been bought in the first place for less than half the price? One might even go part way in accepting Pisani's claim that the pivotal AIDS activist demand to give voice to HIV-positives has been co-opted and institutionalized by the AIDS industry under the official acronym GIPA—Greater Involvement of People with AIDS—sometimes resulting in the dogmatic insistence that those who are infected with HIV are inevitably best positioned to lead the charge against the epidemic. "HIV is a virus, not a job qualification," Pisani observes. But it's easier to take potshots at political correctness and present oneself as the most virtuous person in the room than it is to call attention to the many shades of gray that coat problems as multidimensional and intractable as HIV/AIDS.

For example, Pisani takes aim at (and confesses her past complicity in contributing to) the AIDS industry scaremongering that has sought to drum up support for HIV/AIDS initiatives by suggesting that "everyone is at risk" or that the kind of generalized epidemic found among heterosexuals in sub-Saharan Africa is also likely to develop in populous Asian countries. But while it's never a good idea, in the long run, to "beat up" the numbers, as she puts it, one does not want to feed the backlash, either—to encourage the increasingly voiced opinion that AIDS is not really such a big global threat and that the money devoted to it might be better spent on other diseases (an argument that predictably tends to foreclose the option of spending more money on health promotion in general and less on other things). Pisani doesn't believe that HIV/AIDS is a small problem; she notes that the scope of the epidemic in Asia will be enormous even if restricted to sex workers and their clients, drug injectors and men who have sex with men. Nevertheless, her arguments sometimes veer close to those of critics who maintain that the epidemic threat is simply overblown.

By contrast, in other cases Pisani provides a valuable service by forcing the reader to grapple with inconvenient truths. For example, as the AIDS industry has ramped up its support for treatment-access programs in the global South—a cause that George W. Bush and even the late Jesse Helms could get behind in a big way, because it fits traditional models of charity and doesn't require dwelling on the "nasty" details of HIV transmission—the risk is that HIV prevention is being left by the wayside. The official response from many quarters is that this isn't really too much of a problem because, after all, treatment is prevention. That is, antiretroviral (ARV) therapy reduces the viral load of those being treated, making them less likely to infect their sexual partners. This reasoning is sound as far as it goes, and it received much discussion at the Mexico conference, but Pisani points out the fatal flaw: the more effective the ARV therapy, the longer the infected person lives, and the more likely he or she is to remain healthy and sexually active. Therefore, the more treatment one provides in a given country, the higher the objective need for prevention campaigns. While effective prevention programs may ultimately make treatment less necessary, effective treatment programs simply don't make prevention less necessary. The stakes here are well illustrated by a UN progress report issued this summer. According to the report, in 2007 nearly a million people began ARV treatment in developing countries, while 2.5 million became infected with HIV.

Also standing out as a particular benefit of *The Wisdom of Whores* is Pisani's capacity to reflect critically on the nuts and bolts of epidemiological work and describe the limitations of research when it collides with real-world complexity. Too many interview schedules that inquire into personal histories of risky practices, she says, "ask people to remember things they can't remember, or to calculate things they can't calculate." Too often, statistical extrapolations are drawn from samples of a population that are simply not representative. And the careful preparation of questionnaires that list a box for every official HIV risk category may miss the point that "real people don't have sex in boxes"—a problem Pisani illustrates nicely with the story of Fuad, an Indonesian man she interviewed who called himself heterosexual, had regular sex with a girlfriend/sex worker but also paid for sex with transgender sex workers while earning money on the side from other men who paid him for sex. As Pisani notes, Fuad "pushed a lot of the 'high-risk' buttons for HIV infection, yet he wasn't a female sex worker, a client, a drug injector, a gay man or a student. He didn't fit into a single one of our questionnaire boxes." Figuring out what to do with people like Fuad—how to count them, and how to reach them through HIV-prevention campaigns—is one of many crucial tasks in the development of an effective science and politics of HIV/AIDS.

Like Elizabeth Pisani, Jonny Steinberg makes himself into a central character in his beautiful and perceptive book, *Sizwe's Test*. But Steinberg (twice the recipient of South Africa's highest prize for nonfiction) is as quiet and unobtrusive as Pisani is demonstrative and ever-present. Though the book revolves around his complicated friendship with a young South African villager pseudonymously named Sizwe Magadla, Steinberg allows most of the book to pass before telling us about his own past and identity and how they intersect with the book's central concerns. Yet Steinberg's status as narrator-on-the-periphery proves entirely appropriate for a book that deliberately positions itself on the anthropological margins of the fight for AIDS treatment access in the global South.

The larger story here is a fascinating chapter in the modern history of global health politics. By 1996 combination drug therapy was being heralded in wealthy countries for its "Lazarus effect" in bringing many HIV-positive people back from the brink of death. Yet sub-Saharan Africa, currently home to 22 million of the 33 million people living with HIV/AIDS around the world, was essentially written off. Prevention campaigns were fine for the developing world, but ARVs were too costly to introduce there; moreover, the public health infrastructure was too primitive to support them, and the uneducated inhabitants of poor countries, it was argued, could not be counted on to maintain a vigilant adherence to multidrug treatment, the failure of which would promote the spread of drug-resistant strains of the virus. Steinberg notes that, as late as 2001, Andrew Natsios, the head of USAID, warned about wasting money by providing medications that would have to be taken on a regular schedule twice a day for life. In Africa, Natsios explained, "people do not know what watches and clocks are. They do not use Western means for telling time. They use the sun."

Yet this conventional wisdom was in the process of being shattered by a series of unanticipated developments. Beginning in the late 1990s, a transnational alliance of treatment activists helped to put pressure on funders to cough up significant sums for ARVs. By 2001 chemists in India (and later in Brazil) had broken the patents on expensive, brand-name ARVs by "reverse engineering"

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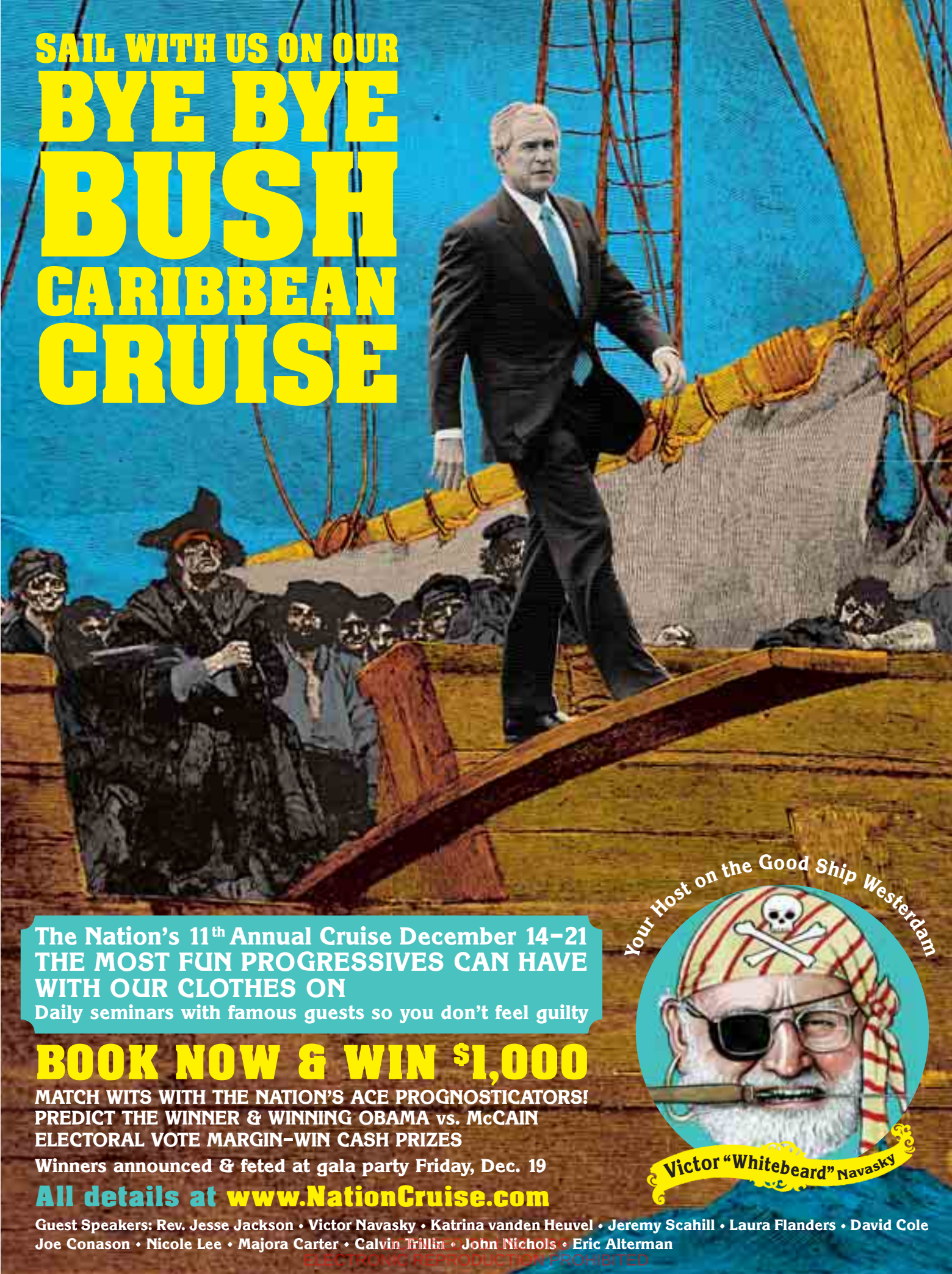
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the drugs and producing generic versions that could be sold at a fraction of the cost. And groups like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, or Doctors Without Borders) had set up shop in sub-Saharan Africa, pioneering programs that soon demonstrated to just about everyone's satisfaction that it was possible to obtain rates of adherence to ARV regimens that closely resembled those in the affluent urban centers of the global North. Notwithstanding many obstacles that in the case of South Africa notably included a deep suspicion of ARVs by President Thabo Mbeki, the stage was set for a fundamental transformation in the approach to AIDS management in the countries that were suffering the most from its devastating effects.

For one Lusikisiki villager, the collective embrace of a local HIV treatment campaign is a risk.

Steinberg tracks this effort by following MSF to the remote rural district of Lusikisiki in Eastern Cape province, South Africa, where the average monthly income, among the few who hold jobs, is less than $140. Here, in a village lacking electricity and running water, located nine unpaved miles from the nearest health clinic, he befriends Sizwe, a young man who "was healthy and strong and had never tested for HIV." Steinberg wants to know why not. Despite their disparate backgrounds—Steinberg is white, gay and urban; Sizwe is black, heterosexual and has lived all his life in the village—the two young men find affinity in their distrust of conventional wisdom. As their conversations unfold and their intimacy and mutual empathy deepen over many months, Steinberg comes to realize that he doesn't want to write the book he had first imagined, one that recounts the successes of MSF in disseminating ARV treatment. Instead, it is Sizwe—"a skeptical man on the margins of [the] program"—his book should revolve around. In the eloquent narrative that recounts the conversations between the two men and explores the embeddedness of Sizwe's life in the history of his community, Steinberg demonstrates how compellingly one can paint a picture of broader social structures and social change by zooming in on the private troubles, desires and yearnings of a single individual.

We never learn why Sizwe resists taking the test that, depending on the result, could set his mind at ease or lead him to receive life-saving treatment. However, over the course of the book, Steinberg suggests many explanations that are not mutually exclusive. Sizwe, it seems, lacks faith in the capacity of the MSF program not only to accomplish its biomedical tasks but also to shelter him from the devastating symbolic consequences of testing positive—the loss of identity and status, the sense of inescapable contamination. Sizwe "lives in a space the MSF program has not penetrated: he is the embodiment of the program's limits." His responses thereby shed light on the remarkable characteristics of the ARV treatment program.

As Steinberg explains, such treatment has succeeded in South Africa through its metamorphosis into a social movement that combines the inspired work of MSF with the innovative activism of the grassroots Treatment Action Campaign (TAC). MSF challenged the presumption that ARVs were complex stuff that only urban medical specialists could administer; they "declared, by simple fiat, that it was not complicated medicine, that the knowledge required to make it successful could be condensed into simple codes and distributed among nurses, laypeople, and ARV users themselves." This packaging of ARVs as a standardized and transportable technology was further enabled by TAC, which trained laypeople to perform HIV testing and counseling and to run the support groups that promote drug adherence. Melding the tactics and symbolism of ACT UP with that of South Africa's antiapartheid movement, TAC took old freedom songs and gave them new lyrics about blood tests and ARVs. The twin symbols of this joint effort between MSF and TAC were the ubiquitous plastic pillboxes, their fourteen compartments labeled "Sunday" through "Saturday," "morning" and "evening"; and TAC's "HIV Positive" T-shirts, the wearing of which performatively declared an end to silence and invisibility.

Together, MSF and TAC helped the newly treated to develop what Steinberg calls "a lively relationship with their medicines, a relationship at once emotional and cognitive." HIV patients "must know the name of each pill, its shape, its color, its nickname, all its potential side effects. They are stuck with these tablets for their lives." And this relationship with one's pills implied, as well, a new relationship with oneself, expressed in a responsibility to monitor the invisible indicators of bodily states—CD4 counts, viral loads—that reflect the vicissitudes of antiviral treatment. Scholars of biomedicine in the West have characterized similar developments in healthcare as the promotion of a new form of "governmentality," a kind of self-regulation that corresponds to a neoliberal political moment in which the state has withdrawn and left it up to individuals to assess their risk and care for themselves. But the South African story is not one about isolated individuals left to their own devices. Rather, it is the social movement and, more concretely, the support group that become the loci of self-surveillance and mutual aid.

The problem for Sizwe is that this collective embrace is precisely what he doesn't want. To him, the treatment campaign is not a social movement at all but a "cult," with its own prescriptive rituals and dogma. For example, initiates are required to renounce alcohol and tobacco, which seems to have more to do with submission to the power of the group than with any scientific evidence about how these substances interact with ARVs. Most notably, support-group meetings are held outdoors on clinic grounds: "That they are conducted out in the open, in full view of passersby, is both their signature and an emblem of their most urgent aspiration: to take the virus and those it afflicts from their secret places of shame." But to Sizwe, such openness in a region like Lusikisiki would in fact reinforce stigma as effectively as, say, the tattoos that Buckley proposed in 1986. Being "outed" in his community is an intolerable risk, one that would drown out the benefits that might accrue from the medications.

Steinberg is insightful in exploring why South Africa's ARV program may not work for everyone, and he also considers the important issue of the longevity of the program after the departure from the scene of the MSF physicians. One dilemma that receives only a few sentences in his account is also crucially relevant for the continued success of the program. Even if patients adhere perfectly to their regimens, eventually the drugs will stop working their magic as the virus in their bodies mutates and develops the capacity to resist the drugs. In the global North, the best solution to this problem so far has been an ever-expanding array of ARVs—a few dozen that may be taken in many possible combinations—accompanied by expensive assays that track the development of resistance and help predict beneficial alternatives. In places like South Africa, there is no generally available second-line treatment. The need to grapple with this problem, as well as to imagine new ways of preventing infection in the first place, brings us back squarely to Pisani's terrain. Sizwe's story may lead us deep into the recesses of his mind, but it also leaves us with broad questions about the priorities of the AIDS industry and its long-term capacity to advance health on a global level. ■

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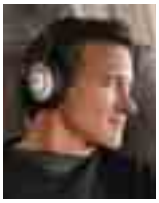

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Robert Oppenheimer and Walt Rostow at Yale University in 1958

Mandarins, Guns and Money

by MARK MAZOWER

Early in 1966 the historian Fritz Stern traveled to Washington to solicit support for an appeal of academics against the Vietnam War. At the airport, returning home, he ran into a colleague—MIT political scientist Ithiel de Sola Pool. Professor Pool did not share Stern's misgivings about the war. "Vietnam," he told Stern enthusiastically, "is the greatest social-science laboratory we have ever had!"

Such was the mind-set among some of the scholars at MIT's Center for International Studies, where Pool's international communications project was bringing behavioral science to bear on the study of international relations. His colleague, the economist Walt Rostow, had left the center for a new career as a presidential policy adviser, which culminated, in April 1966, in a position as Lyndon Johnson's national security adviser. There were like-minded men in other well-funded think tanks across the country. Over the previous two decades, cold war presidents had successfully enlisted academia in the search for usable knowledge about the world they hoped to lead. Ample funding, entrepreneurial professors and policy-makers thirsting for anything that looked like technical expertise provided a combustible mix.

Economists With Guns
Authoritarian Development and US-Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968.
By Bradley R. Simpson.
Stanford. 376 pp. $60.

America's Rasputin
Walt Rostow and the Vietnam War.
By David Milne.
Hill and Wang. 320 pp. $26.

International Political Economy
An Intellectual History.
By Benjamin J. Cohen.
Princeton. 224 pp. Paper $26.95.

In Theory and in Practice
Harvard's Center for International Affairs, 1958–1983.
By David C. Atkinson.
Harvard. 248 pp. $17.95.

How this happened, and what the effects were—on the world of policy and on ideas—is a complex and still highly pertinent story. Vietnam, as the books considered here show, bankrupted the world-molding optimism of modernization theorists like Rostow and Pool, but it certainly didn't put an end to academic theorizing about global affairs or to the desire of American academics to demonstrate the usefulness of their theories to their political masters. Indonesia—the often neglected counterpart to Vietnam—was the more typical model, as Bradley Simpson shows: a playground for "economists with guns." The politics were often ugly, and the intellectual output was unedifying and deeply compromised.

It all really started with World War II. Before the Depression there had been plenty of serious American scholarship in international affairs, much of it shaped by Wilsonian idealism and a keen interest in the administrative and legal institutions established at the Versailles peace conference. Columbia University president Nicholas Murray Butler's belief in the pacific powers of "the international mind" set the tone. But government interest—and funding—was minimal. It was wartime science projects like the Manhattan Project and the Radiation Laboratory that got Washington used to paying top dollar for academic expertise. Military service cemented personal ties between policy-makers, funding bodies and academics. Above all, the experience of the war provided a template for cold war theory and strategy. David Milne points this out very clearly in Rostow's case: *America's Rasputin* offers a lively, well-researched read, connecting recent scholarship on the development of American social science to the Vietnam catastrophe. In Milne's telling, Rostow makes a very effective antihero, an epitome of intellectual hubris whose story casts a vivid light on our early twenty-first-century warmakers.

Rostow had had a good war. In 1942 he had worked in the Office of Strategic Services and had selected bombing targets in the Third Reich; ever after he remained convinced that the policy of strategic bombing had crippled Hitler's war machine. Germany remained a preoccupation of his beyond 1945, when he passed up the chance of a job at Harvard in order to help Gunnar Myrdal oversee the economic reconstruction of Europe. Strategic bombing and the Marshall Plan: this was the essence of Rostow's plan for the cold war front line in Southeast Asia. Two decades after Hitler's death, Rostow suggested confronting the Vietcong as if they were Nazis: knock them out of the war by destroying their industrial infrastructure, then win the battle for hearts and minds with a serious program of socioeconomic transformation through development assistance.

To get to this point, Rostow needed a theory, one that would allow him to soar above the differences between the Germans

Mark Mazower teaches history at Columbia University. His new book, Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe *(Penguin Press), is just out.*

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Population, Immigration And The Foreseeable Limits Of America's Capacity: A Conundrum Of Epic Proportions For The Progressive Thinker.

As America's population races from the current 300 million to a projected 400 million in the next 30 years*, progressive thinkers are confronted with a debate among themselves – and others – as to our nation's capacity to absorb domestic population growth and growth due almost entirely to immigration. What price will we pay in terms of the environment? What will be the impact on resources from water to energy? What additional challenges will be created by this growth? What is our responsibility to future generations?

The Dots That Nobody Really Wants To Connect

People of virtually all major political persuasions agree that America has problems—huge problems. Air quality in many regions is a threat to health. Water is compromised and becoming scarce. Traffic in a number of metropolitan areas has arrived at a point that makes it unfixable. Infrastructure is a disaster waiting to happen. Who can argue with those observations? The disagreement arises when anyone makes the point that all of these problems are caused by a large and fast-growing population. The more people there are, the more challenging the problems become. These problems are acute with our population at the current level of 300 million. What happens at 400 million? Or 600 million?

The Misconception Of Inevitability

One prevailing thought for those willing to connect the dots is that meteoric population growth is inevitable. The pyramid is being built and there is nothing we can do about it. Population growth is destined to be exponential. But the reality is that Americans are having fewer children. The other reality is that 82%** of America's future population growth will be driven by immigration and births to immigrants. While immigration at some level will surely continue, there is a case to be made for taking another look at the numbers in order to maintain some order and common sense in the growth of our population.

At Some Point, We May Have To Make A Choice

We want it all. We want a clean environment, adequate natural resources, good housing, plenty of food, first-rate healthcare and so on. We also feel a need to welcome the world to our front door, or in millions of cases, our back door. But America is rapidly approaching the point of no return. Either we opt for preserving the quality of life that has attracted so many millions in the past by limiting some in the future. Or we continue to accept millions, knowing that our children and grandchildren will continue to pay a huge price.

Nobody wants to close the doors. Nobody wants to totally abandon our heritage of immigration and rich tapestry it has woven. But with more sensible numbers we could actually restore it. More and more progressive thinkers are saying it is time to connect the dots. To think about the future. To solve the conundrum that is placing so many like-minded thinkers in conflict.

America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning

300 million people today, 400 million in just 30 years. Think about it.

American Immigration Control Foundation	Californians for Population Stabilization	Federation for American Immigration Reform	NumbersUSA	Social Contract Press
www.aicfoundation.com	**www.capsweb.org**	**www.fairus.org**	**www.numbersusa.org**	**www.thesocialcontract.com**

*Based on U.S. Census Bureau projections, 2008
**Pew Hispanic Center

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and the Vietnamese. The answer was the concept of modernization, an evolutionary approach to contemporary history. Milne says little about this, perhaps because the subject has been well covered by Nils Gilman in *Mandarins of the Future*. But Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth* (published in 1960 and subtitled, with typical modesty, *A Non-Communist Manifesto*) gives the fundamentals, outlining the "stages" of development all countries allegedly had to pass through in order to achieve their "takeoff" into the modern era. Critically, Rostow argued, most new states would need help before they could become self-sustaining. If the United States did not provide aid, Communists would move in, taking advantage of the disorientation that sudden social change induced. Initially, he assumed—as in the case of postwar Germany and Japan—that modernization would spread democracy. But by the time modernization theory was sufficiently influential to shape American policy, it had acquired a distinctly authoritarian cast. As Ike's State Department put it, the dictators and military strongmen who had emerged throughout the underdeveloped world by the end of the 1950s offered certain short-run advantages to the United States. Indonesia was a vital example, well described by Simpson in his disturbing and illuminating book. Its army's slaughter of half a million people there—in the name of wiping out the country's Communist Party—did not stop Rostow and his colleagues from treating the generals as partners. Quite the contrary: at least the Communists had been disposed of.

Theory alone guaranteed nothing, unless politicians and their staffers listened. Rostow's connections boosted his advancement. From his Yale undergraduate days he knew Richard Bissell (the Bay of Pigs and other CIA achievements still before him) as well as the man who brought him to MIT, his old friend Max Millikan. Like Rostow, Millikan had been involved as an economist in the European reconstruction effort of the late 1940s—in his case as assistant to the Marshall Plan administrator Paul Hoffman. Between joining MIT and setting up the Center for International Studies, Millikan also served briefly as assistant director of the CIA under Walter Bedell Smith. All these connections proved vital. The center grew out of Project Troy, an early State Department commission to research radio jamming and psychological warfare against the Soviet Union. When State's money dried up, Millikan turned to his old employers, the CIA, and to the Ford Foundation (by now run by his former boss Hoffman). Harvard stood aloof; led by sociologist Talcott Parsons, its social scientists were engrossed in the loftier goal of creating an entirely new theory that would unite all the social sciences. MIT was happy to do the nitty-gritty problem-solving for the government, and it got the loot. In 1953 Ford assured the center's future with an enormous $1.8 million grant. For MIT it was a bargain: it put in almost no money and got terrific input into the shaping of foreign policy.

Millikan had wanted Rostow at the center because they basically agreed on what America needed. In the early 1950s the cold war suddenly became a global competition for influence in the decolonizing world, and many felt that Washington needed to compete much more aggressively. In 1954, a week after the battle of Dien Bien Phu, Rostow and Millikan took part in a conference to generate a "world economic plan" that would ensure the triumph of freedom. The two men wrote the resulting report, forwarded to Eisenhower, emphasizing development aid as the key to securing American foreign policy goals: it had worked in Europe, and now America needed to spend in the Third World. This got nowhere with Ike: he was too much of a fiscal conservative, and his inner circle disliked Rostow's boosterish tone. But others were listening, especially a young senator from Massachusetts. Rostow wrote some speeches for Kennedy, then joined his Administration, whose Alliance for Progress, the centerpiece of what Kennedy proudly proclaimed to be the Decade of Development, marked the modernizers' moment. In Washington, as assistant to McGeorge Bundy—Kennedy's national security adviser—Rostow was given special responsibility for Southeast Asia. Vietnam was his bailiwick, a chance to show what modernization theory could do to win the cold war. After Kennedy's death, Rostow replaced Bundy as Johnson's national security adviser—"my goddamn intellectual," the Texan growled. Rostow's hour had come. No wonder Professor Pool was gung-ho.

As Vietnam went from bad to worse, ideas for a Mekong Delta TVA were scrapped.

The moment of triumph did not last long. As Vietnam went from bad to worse, ideas for a Mekong Delta TVA were scrapped. Harvard professor Samuel Huntington, advising the State Department, supported forcing the civilian population into cities; but even the "strategic hamlets" scheme backfired. Still, the hawkish Rostow remained optimistic. He ignored those who argued that strategic bombing had failed to knock out the Germans or that Vietnam was different, just as he ignored the evidence of Chinese support of the North Vietnamese. Above all, he closed his eyes to the inconvenient fact that he was not fighting *homo economicus* but an enemy whose morale depended on the resolve to drive out an imperialistic invader. Rostow did not understand this, because he did not think of himself as an imperialist. All he wanted was to live up to his poet namesake—his middle name was Whitman—by helping nations make the transition from colonialism and thereby transforming the world. Milne compares him with the ideologically driven neocons on the eve of the Iraq War. Both saw America as the model for being modern, and both saw war as one way to spread the gospel. But the differences are as important. Rostow was a man of the 1960s who thought states could make a difference, whereas the neocons were also neoliberals—all for dismantling the state and allowing free-market forces to work their magic. Just as important, Rostow and his cohort were key players in the intellectual and academic world of 1960s America, whereas by 2000, the neocons, ensconced in think tanks, and academics had almost nothing—nothing civil, anyway—to say to one another.

After Vietnam, modernization theory lost its shine, as did Rostow, who was unable to obtain a job on the East Coast: MIT did not invite him back. Only LBJ's foresight got him a berth in Texas, at the state university's Lyndon B. Johnson School for Public Affairs. But this certainly did not mean the end of the love affair between the social science professoriat and the policy world, merely a changing of the guard and a new paradigm or two. Modernization theory had been one of the winners in the scramble among social scientists for cold war funding, but we should not forget that there had been losers too: anthropology had gotten very little, despite Margaret Mead's sterling wartime service and her desire to show how Russian swaddling customs shaped the Soviet mind-set. Geography—the subject that had smoothed the path of Isaiah Bowman, director of the American Geographical Society and president of Johns Hopkins, to the highest reaches of government service in two world wars—seemed to have become so irrelevant by the late 1940s that first Harvard and then many other leading universities closed their departments. In area-studies centers, a little money trickled down to Assyriologists, Sanskritists and experts on Sufism and Confucius. But as the behavioral revolution swept sociology and

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political science, the gulf between the culture-bounded area-studies folk and the rest widened. For those who regarded history, languages and the values other societies actually lived by as something of a distraction, economics was now the discipline to emulate. Economics, as Philip Mirowski has demonstrated so brilliantly, had successfully refashioned itself first on the basis of physics and then on the basis of wartime operations research and cybernetics. Studying politics in the new economistic vein meant studying "systems," relationships, actors, agents. It was all supposedly value-neutral, timeless and formal—animated by a vision of science arguably already some two decades out of date.

International relations initially remained somewhat aloof from the rush to scientism. In the 1950s, its theorists spoke as though the world comprised little besides states locked in a perennial struggle for power. They were critical of interwar scholars who had worn their Wilsonian internationalism on their sleeve and of the cold war fanatics who spoke about evil and morality whenever they mentioned the Soviet Union. Men like Hans Morgenthau prided themselves on their realism, their lack of ideological zeal, their powerful sense of the limits of what was possible. Morgenthau, in particular, insisted that the category of "the political" was simply irreducible—conflict was thus a permanent fact of international life. Rostow's humiliation in Vietnam, and the collapse of modernization theory, created an opening. In the realm of policy, Rostow was succeeded by a very different breed of academic: the realist Henry Kissinger. Kissinger was a historian, not a social scientist, a student of the art of diplomacy and a practitioner, rather than a theoretician, of negotiation in the nuclear age.

In the universities, though, the realist school of international relations was coming under fire. It was not only Vietnam that cast a shadow. There was also the first oil crisis and the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system; the dollar was finally decoupled from gold, and unprecedented quantities of petrodollars sloshed around the world. It was in these circumstances that American international relations theorists—and their discipline's need for a "theory" was something they keenly felt—took issue with the idea that states were the only entities that counted in the world, and that military and diplomatic power were the only ways nations projected their influence. What they came up with was international political economy, the subject of Benjamin Cohen's informative insider's account.

Kissinger's home at Harvard—the Center for International Affairs, the subject of David Atkinson's new book *In Theory and In Practice*—was the pivot of the intellectual reorientation. With Kissinger and Robert Bowie, former head of the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department, in charge, it is not surprising that the center had started off focused on diplomacy, defense policy and nuclear strategy. From 1970 onward, however, younger scholars there pushed to include the international economy as a subject for political analysis. Not that international political economy ever rocked the boat of global capitalism. What it promised to do, however, was valuable enough—to cut across the ever more rigidly policed demarcation line between economics and political science. Susan Strange, the pioneering British student of international relations, had condemned the "enclosure movement," in which social scientists had turned their backs on the older conception of a unified field of political economy to till their smaller grounds. The process had started in the nineteenth century. But the exponential postwar growth of the American social sciences had made the problem much worse. Economists, for example, built an entire subdiscipline—microeconomics—on the philosophical foundations of early nineteenth-century utilitarian psychology; but with no incentive to ask what this meant and how reliable a basis it was for anything at all, they were losing themselves in ever more elegant flights of mathematical fancy.

Unfortunately, the move to rethink social scientific disciplinary boundaries quickly ran out of steam. In 1972 Harvard's Department of Social Relations was closed and its members trotted back to their separate disciplines, testifying to the collapse of the most sustained effort to create a unified social theory seen since the war. Economics, now less interested than ever in words, reclaimed its role as the model for social scientific research in the American academy. International political economy reincorporated elements of the older realist approach—the focus on states was extended to international governmental organizations—but yoked these to an ever more emphatically "scientific" structure of argument. Cohen's book is a lament by a scholar hoping against hope that his discipline can still learn from its history. The harvest has been disappointing, he admits, the crop blighted. International political economy has failed to live up to its early promise and has succumbed to the same bogus scientism that infected other social scientific approaches to the world before it.

Indeed, his data reveal that the problem is getting much worse. The wartime generation—whose education had been wide and multidisciplinary—is passing and being replaced by wannabe scientists whose professional training devalues real knowledge of the world. In the nineteenth century it was not at all uncommon for those commenting on international affairs to have a knowledge of languages; in today's universities, most literary scholars can't tell their

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Not for me a lesson on modesty,
A house to remind me my many projects
Are only wishes, each meant sincerely
As a balloonist means sincerely to cross the ocean
Till a puff of wind has the final say.

CARL DENNIS

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balance of trade from their balance of payments while increasingly the only language international relations theorists are trained in is a bizarre kind of quasi mathematics. In the late 1970s, fewer than 10 percent of the articles published in the field stressed formal modeling or econometrics, which use statistical models to test economic principles; by the early years of the twenty-first century, the figure had risen to nearly half. Mathematicians, it is worth noting, have been underwhelmed by this work; in the 1980s they blocked an eminent Harvard political scientist from membership in the National Academy of Sciences, alleging pseudoscience. Today you can get tenure as a scholar of international relations without knowing a single foreign language or ever quoting a foreign-language source. But leave out the equations and the variables, and your career path will be a rocky one.

There was, to be sure, an alternative to this increasingly recherché use of quantitative techniques and scientific jargon. Cohen discusses the British version of international studies, which was from the start and has remained more catholic in its disciplinary borrowings and more critical of existing power relations, as befits the work produced by the underfunded employees of a world power in decline. But as Cohen shows, there has been little contact or understanding between theorists on either side of the Atlantic. British academics charge their US counterparts with being Washington's lackeys and overly abstract; the latter accuse the former of woolly thought, of being unscientific and lacking the discipline to generate verifiable claims about the world.

Both charges are probably true. The British scholars are not good at generating law-like observations about international affairs (although cynics will not necessarily see this as a failing). As for American scholars, it is striking how much the theorization of international relations has fostered a detachment from the real world. For all its numerous sins, modernization theory did generate a body of knowledge about characteristics of countries like India and Indonesia. But since the 1970s, international relations has withdrawn to such lofty mathematical heights that detailed expertise about specific areas of the world may today be enough to write a scholar off as—dreaded phrase—an area specialist. The only alternative to generating theory seems to be providing counsel for the prince, a sort of international management consultancy for the diplomat-statesman. From the august heights of Professor Joseph Nye's *The Powers to Lead* (2008) to the less refined insights provided by books like Donald Kettl's *Team Bush: Leadership Lessons From the Bush White House* (2003), the tendency is to talk about international relations in terms of the problem of America's place in the world and to reduce the problem to that of leadership. Formulated in such terms, there soon ceases to be very much that is particularly political about political science: useful lessons can be drawn from CEOs, Mafia bosses, sports coaches and anyone else in charge.

I confess to having finished these books in a mood somewhere between perplexity and despair. Was the choice faced by social scientists always between a frighteningly lethal developmentalism and a pseudoscience of international relations? How can the world's wealthiest country, with vast resources at its disposal, have ended up with such a paltry intellectual—and diplomatic—return on its investment? It is all too easy to understand that scholars enraptured by access to power ended up rationalizing deeply unethical foreign policies; diplomacy and ethics have, by their nature, an uneasy relationship. More troubling, surely, is how to explain the depth of the failure of the social sciences to produce substantial and lasting knowledge about the world, to have succeeded only in making American policy on the whole more rather than less parochial.

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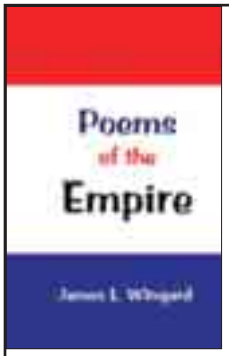

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war, something that ultimately benefited neither scholarship nor government. Huge sums of money were suddenly poured into the universities. Those with knowledge to offer were not necessarily those to whom policy-makers listened. The social scientists who got the grants offered technical advice that simplified the world and made it governable, using behavioral science or mathematical economics as their models. They turned human affairs into data sets, cultural patterns into forms of behavioral response, and they replaced the messy multiplicity of words and tongues with the universal and quantifiable language of science. This was not so much a military-industrial complex as a governmental-academic one. With the collapse of modernization theory, international relations offered itself as a new way of understanding the world. But world affairs continued to be seen as a problem to be managed, and the view adopted was almost always that from Washington. The rise of the think tanks made a bad problem worse, because as they adopted ever more partisan identities—and as American politics became more polarized—so academics reified the idea of value-neutral science and banished any explicit consideration of politics from their treatment of the world. Alternative approaches—dependency theory, underdevelopment, Marxism—found their niche in the American academy but rarely in mainstream politics departments.

Can social scientists these days do anything like the harm Walt Rostow inflicted? The short answer is yes. What of the Stanford political scientist turned policy-maker who has tried applying the lessons she mistakenly derived from the Soviet collapse to the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein? Condoleezza Rice is only the most obvious case, and the country's continuing love affair with technical expertise guarantees a receptive audience for applied social science. Last year the National Research Council recommended that the Pentagon double the research funding for the behavioral and social sciences; scholars are already helping to build computer-simulated models to predict insurgencies in Iraq and identify "the root causes of terrorism." Professor Pool's heirs march on. ■

FOCUS FEATURES

Brad Pitt as Chad in *Burn After Reading*

Burned Out

by STUART KLAWANS

When last heard from, in the closing scene of *No Country for Old Men*, Joel and Ethan Coen were revealing to Tommy Lee Jones that grace is freely given by the God they don't believe in. "Signs and wonders," Jones had murmured earlier in the film, using the Bible's words to stave off his dread of a meaningless world; but this struggle was his alone, to be observed by the Coens only at fitful intervals and generally from a distance. For their part, the wood-chipper boys seemed as comfortable as ever with the possibility that an abundance of greed and

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slaughter might be that and nothing more. Let the last word go to the sheriff with the tenuous faith. They'd already given the movie to the killer with implacable power.

Now, continuing with their carefree agnosticism where they'd left off, the Coens begin *Burn After Reading* with a view of earth that seems godlike, until they subject it to a pair of demystifications. In the first, which is immediate, you seem to descend through the turning clouds to a building identified as CIA headquarters. God's eye, evidently, is only a spy satellite. The second demystification, which lasts for the rest of the movie, proves that omniscience even on this mundane level is futile, since we live in an amoral world of petty betrayals and random mayhem. That's all right with the Coens. *Burn After Reading* is one of their comedies.

Full of clowns and foolery, signifying nothing, *Burn After Reading* is as deliberately self-canceling a story as you would expect from its title, or from its setting in an imaginary Washington where no one is the least bit interested in government. The sole character to come close to wonkishness is Osborne Cox (John Malkovich), the last living CIA analyst to wear three-piece suits and bow ties, who likes to hear himself rattle on about "mission" and "higher patriotism" but does so only because he's been fired for drinking. Now he whiles away the time by screaming obscenities, getting soused at the Princeton Club and composing his "memwah," which he believes will settle his scores. He's what Linda Litzke (Frances McDormand) would call a negative person.

She, by contrast, is very positively interested in her own appearance (which she wants to improve by means of four or five cosmetic procedures) and also in Internet dating, an endeavor that in her experience demands unswerving optimism. Cheerfully ignorant of the political currents around her, Linda understands nothing of Cox's memoir when a copy of it, stored on a computer disk, accidentally turns up in the franchise gym where she works. Soon enough, though, at the prompting of her workmate Chad (Brad Pitt), she convinces herself that the disk might bring in money for her makeover.

Had the Coens chosen to add cartoon characters to their genre mix, an animated wiseguy of a rabbit might have popped up at this juncture, to point at the computer disk and hold up a sign marked MacGuffin. Or, rather, "MacGuffin." Forever keen to re-create film history and then undo the re-creation, the Coens this time have called up some of the trappings of a Hitchcock adventure—the backdrop of public monuments, the foreground of voyeurism, the blundering of an ordinary citizen into peril—but have frustrated Hitchcock's favorite device by introducing a mystery object that nobody wants to chase. Possession of the computer disk does set off all sorts of trouble for Linda, Chad and several other characters; and yet nobody, Ozzie Cox included, actually wants the thing. Hence the feeling of stasis that settles over *Burn After Reading*. The tone may be antic and frantic, but the incidents keep looping back on themselves, catching the characters in coils of repetition.

Maybe that's because the characters never learn. All of them are middle-aged, and all are determined to behave like adolescents. Ozzie sulks about the house like a kid who's doing nothing on his school break and just daring someone to criticize him for it. The flapping of his limbs might be due to mature alcoholism or to a teenage geekiness that never left him—which is only one of the ambiguities, and opportunities for misbehavior, in which Malkovich revels. Sadly, though, McDormand's miming of regression involves no such flights of invention: she merely pulls down her chin and pops her eyes in every close-up. If the character were written differently, you might think this was Linda's way of making herself look ingenuous. But since there's obviously no brain under that blond pageboy, nor any talent for duplicity, Linda's rancid girlishness must be real, leaving one of the film's main performances on the level of a mechanical trick.

This mugging seems all the more grim, given that the actors opposite McDormand perform with such rambunctiousness. The greatest joy of *Burn After Reading*—I'm tempted to say its only joy—is a runaway Brad Pitt in the role of Chad. Topped by a hairdo even more unfortunate than Linda's—a kind of sculpted butterscotch pudding shot through with a splash of cream—Pitt bounces through the film like a toddler in a 40-year-old's body, always sucking on a bottle of some sort, always rushing into situations and then having to wait there while his mind catches up. Alone among the film's characters, Chad is indifferent to sex, or perhaps is presexual—a circumstance that Pitt seems to have welcomed as a liberation from his usual screen duties, releasing him into pure goofiness.

McDormand's other opposite number, who completes the motif of vain, middle-aged child's play, is George Clooney, here wearing the full salt-and-pepper beard of a dedicated home handyman. By profession, Clooney's character is a federal marshal. By

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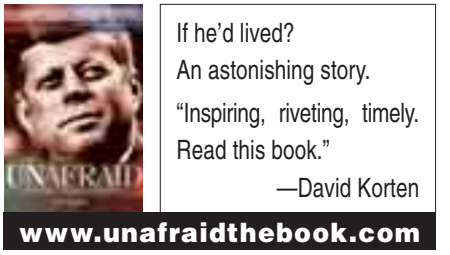

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avocation, he putters about in his basement workshop and also screws around on his wife. It's this latter hobby that links him to Linda and to the nerve-racked household of Osborne Cox—which means, I suppose, that Clooney is playing a human MacGuffin, shuttled back and forth to animate the plot. People do want him, and Clooney shows you why, patting his flat belly with animal self-satisfaction and grinning heartily at anyone who might like to see his teeth. It's fun to watch his looseness as this go-along guy, happily tossing away a line here, shuffling off a bit of physical business there.

But what does his character ultimately amount to? Just a rude sight gag in the basement workshop; just a mechanism for raising and lowering the middle finger (so to speak) in the audience's face.

As I stared at that visual message, in which the Coens told me what I could do with myself, I understood that my problem with *Burn After Reading* has little to do with style. It's fine that the Coens are obsessed with gleaming technique; if they weren't, they might turn out something like *Choke* (the movie that proves you can put Sam Rockwell into a twelve-step program for sex addicts and still generate no laughs). It would also be off the mark to complain of the obvious, that *Burn After Reading* is yet another Coen brothers gallery of grotesques. ("Do they like the people they create?" the brilliant film critic Kent Jones once asked. "I'd say yes, in the same way that a hunter likes his trophies.") Artists before them have given us tales told by or about idiots, many of which have even been funny.

So let the Coen brothers tell me that life is absurd, that the world is fallen, that God is illusory but Satan (or Javier Bardem) is emphatically real. I can take it. But when they call me an idiot for listening, I get a little impatient.

Though I suppose I could be positive, like Linda Litzke, and say that this time they haven't been hypocrites.

My longtime colleague, film critic Godfrey Cheshire, looks awkwardly self-conscious when he puts himself on screen in his new documentary, *Moving Midway*. The voiceovers he recites are rushed, and the image quality is sometimes so poor that you'd think I'd been the cameraman. Cheshire offers no gleaming technique, no game-playing with genre, no actors taking flamboyant star turns. All he's got is a very rich subject, a keen intelligence, an openness to other people's ideas and a story that could move you to happy tears.

The subject, which Cheshire knows first-hand, is the Southern plantation. He knows it as a core American myth (from *The Birth of a Nation* to *Gone With the Wind* to *Roots*); and he knows it as reality, having grown up on one. On his mother's side, he is a member of the Hinton family, which at one time owned 26,000 acres of North Carolina, along with the slaves to work them. The Midway of Cheshire's title is the last plantation house in the family's possession: a boxy two-story white plank building, with three bays and a Doric portico. The structure had stood on a wooded tract in Raleigh since before the Civil War. But with highway traffic roaring past the front door and shopping malls encroaching on all sides, the current owner of Midway, Cheshire's cousin Charlie Silver, decided in 2004 to pick up the house and its outbuildings and move them to another site.

The family's debates about this relocation (will it rile the ghosts?) and the scenes of the move (over open fields and past a quarry) were material to delight any critic aspiring to be a filmmaker: Ross McElwee meets *Fitzcarraldo*. But the greater opportunity afforded by the move, which Cheshire was smart enough to seize, was the chance to bring in a different point of view: that of Robert Hinton, an associate professor of Africana Studies at New York University, whose ancestors had been born into slavery at Midway. Agreeing to come down to Raleigh to meet Cheshire's family and witness the relocation, Hinton became chief historian and associate producer of *Moving Midway*, as well as a droll and acerbic onscreen commentator. "You think the plantation is this house," he tells Cheshire at one point. "I think it's those fields."

The house moves; its meanings move. And though Charlie Silver might seem backward-looking in wanting to return Midway to pastoral isolation, he and his family also move, in a significantly forward direction. Through Cheshire, they come into contact with a previously separate clan of African-American cousins—Hintons descended from the builder of Midway—whose representatives are welcomed as kin when the restored house is reopened.

Moving Midway ends on an improbably hopeful note, with two of the family's elders standing happily side by side: Cheshire's mother, Elizabeth, proud daughter of the Confederacy, and her cousin Abraham Lincoln Hinton, great-grandson of an enslaved plantation cook. "Lord have mercy," Abe laughs, thinking of where he is and how he's gotten there. To which Elizabeth replies, with laughter and feeling, "Lord have mercy." ■

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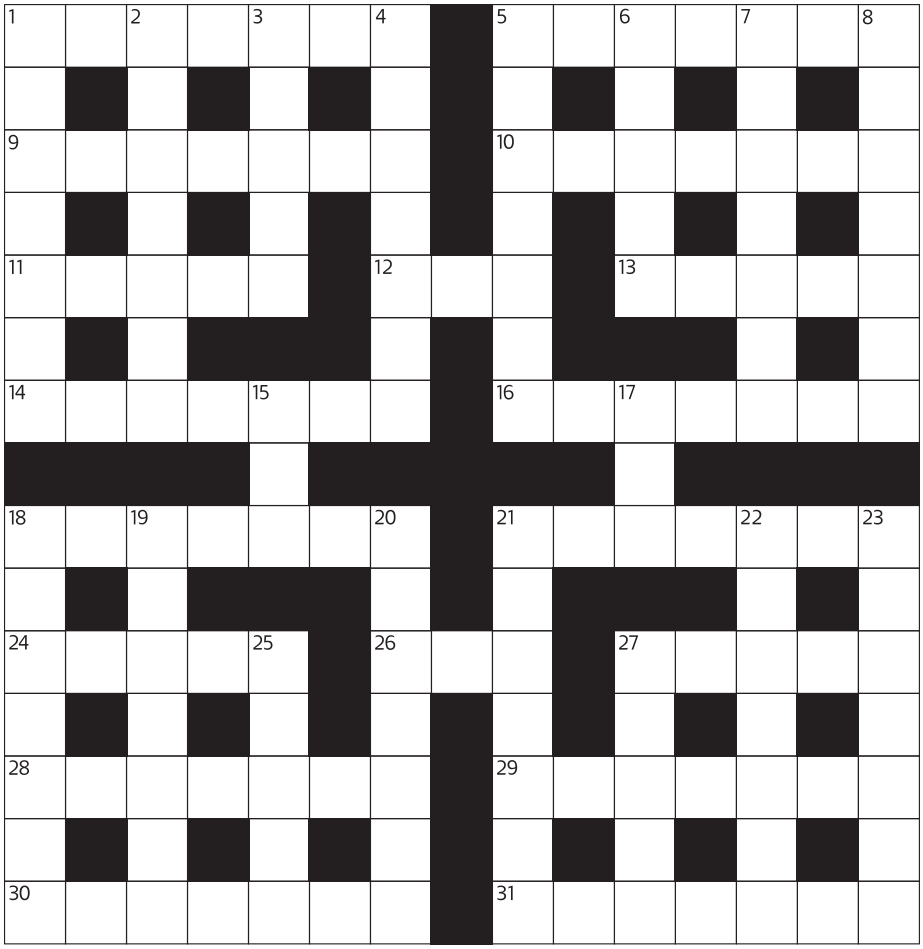

ACROSS

1 Not so much in where you sleep, but given divine protection. (7)

5 The flower makes Daisy, for example, slide. (7)

9 Even games get around a railroad, in short—and just hangs around. (7)

10 About as good as it can get, in the limo Pat provided with some trouble. (7)

11, 12 and **13** A court case, plus the mistake made with it as a shaky way to accomplish something. (5,3,5)

14 and **23** down Go off the warpath, but on the warpath a foe might want to do it on your head. (4,3,7)

16 Scenes shot again, with rats—Eek!—all over the place! (7)

18 Near the back street, briefly, or possibly closest to what some people come out of. (7)

21 The chief of the district coming back on parade? (7)

24 Get a ride by a holdup with it, Tom being a little example. (5)

26 The skill of such as Garfunkel? (3)

27 One side of the surface to show it? (5)

28 State how old you are—which is mean! (7)

29 What one might do to a painting is soak it in water, as you could say with some pain. (7)

30 If tasty, sort of, you could fill the bill this way. (7)

31 Conspicuous tales in the making. (7)

DOWN

1 Used to describe a sort of gin, but people get soaked in it. (7)

2 One of the nobility has a sort of ire that could be displayed way back then. (7)

3, 15 and **25** Empty the heads in a slangy way, and give away all the dirt. (5,3,5)

4 Sort of dies on the raging sea, because one can die with it. (7)

5 Get food down to the commie uprising—in the soup. (7)

6 Willow accompanying the capital of England. (5)

7 French nationalist, a pioneer in the field of anatomy. (7)

8 A star—a cut-up with unusual airs. (7)

15 See 3

17 That American hides the Scotsman's cap. (3)

18 Pointedly ignore the girl—one with a sharp edge. (7)

19 Nothing up—up! A season of spring? That's rich! (7)

20 Describing the homes of England? (Sort of late in the piggy place!) (7)

21 Characteristics of Mr. Cole sure changed! (7)

22 One alone concerning the wrong clues. (7)

23 See 14 across

25 See 3

27 If someone like Gore put on weight, it might be deadly, as a description. (5)

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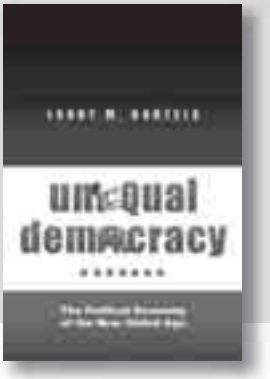

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